THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES THE LIBRARY OF

"'HE-E-E-AVE, MEN—FOR YOUR LIVES, HE-E-AVE!' EXCLAIMED THE BOSS, LIKE ONE IN THE AGONY."—PAGE 143

Mohawk Edition

THE WORKS

OF

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

Vol. 27

THE CHAINBEARER

OR

THE LITTLEPAGE MANUSCRIPTS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK
27 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET

LONDON
24 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND

The Knickerbocker Press

1896

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
SIOUX AMERICANA LIBRARY

PS
1400
A1
1896
v.27

PREFACE.

THE plot has thickened in the few short months that have intervened since the appearance of the first portion of our Manuscripts, and bloodshed has come to deepen the stain left on the country by the widespread and bold assertion of false principles. This must long since have been foreseen; and it is perhaps a subject of just felicitation, that the violence which has occurred was limited to the loss of a single life, when the chances were, and still are, that it will extend to civil war. That portions of the community have behaved nobly under this sudden outbreak of a lawless and unprincipled combination to rob, is undeniable, and ought to be dwelt on with gratitude and an honest pride; that the sense of right of much the larger portion of the country has been deeply wounded, is equally true; that justice has been aroused, and is at this moment speaking in tones of authority to the offenders, is beyond contradiction: but, while all this is admitted, and admitted not altogether without hope, yet are there grounds for fear, so reasonable and strong, that no writer who is faithful to the real interests of his country ought, for a single moment, to lose sight of them.

High authority, in one sense, or that of political power, has pronounced the tenure of a durable lease to be opposed to the spirit of the institutions! Yet these tenures existed when the institutions were formed, and one of the provisions of the institutions themselves guarantees the observance of the covenants under which the tenures exist. It would

have been far wiser, and much nearer to the truth, had those who coveted their neighbors' goods been told that, in their attempts to subvert and destroy the tenures in question, they were opposing a solemn and fundamental provision of law, and in so much opposing the institutions. The capital error is becoming prevalent, which holds the pernicious doctrine that this is a government of men, instead of one of principles. Whenever this error shall so far come to a head as to get to be paramount in action, the well-disposed may sit down and mourn over, not only the liberties of their country, but over its justice and its morals, even should men be nominally so free as to do just what they please.

As the Littlepage Manuscripts advance, we find them becoming more and more suited to the times in which we live. There is an omission of one generation, however, owing to the early death of Mr. Malbone Littlepage, who left an only son to succeed him. This son has felt it to be a duty to complete the series by an addition from his own pen. Without this addition, we should never obtain views of Satanstoe, Lilacsbush, Ravensnest, and Mooseridge, in their present aspects; while with it, we may possibly obtain glimpses that will prove not only amusing but instructive.

There is one point on which, as editor of their Manuscripts, we desire to say a word. It is thought by a portion of our readers, that the first Mr. Littlepage who has written, Cornelius of that name, has manifested an undue asperity on the subject of the New England character. Our reply to this charge is as follows: In the first place, we do not pretend to be answerable for all the opinions of those whose writings are submitted to our supervision, any more than we should be answerable for all the contradictory characters, impulses, and opinions that might be exhibited in a representation of fictitious characters, purely of our own creation. That the Littlepages entertained New York notions, and, if the reader will, New York prejudices, may be true enough; but in pictures of this sort, even prejudices become facts that ought not to be altogether kept down. Then, New England has long since anticipated her revenge, glorifying herself and underrating her neighbors in a way

that, in our opinion, fully justifies those who possess a little Dutch blood in expressing their sentiments on the subject. Those who give so freely should know how to take a little in return; and that more especially, when there is nothing very direct or personal in the hits they receive. For ourselves, we have not a drop of Dutch or New England blood in our veins, and only appear as a bottle-holder to one of the parties in this set-to. If we have recorded what the Dutchman says of the Yankee, we have also recorded what the Yankee says, and that with no particular hesitation, of the Dutchman. We know that these feelings are bygones; but our Manuscripts, thus far, have referred exclusively to the times in which they certainly existed, and that, too, in a force quite as great as they are here represented to be.

We go a little farther. In our judgment the false principles that are to be found in a larger portion of the educated classes, on the subject of the relation between landlord and tenant, are to be traced to the provincial notions of those who have received their impressions from a state of society in which no such relations exist. The danger from the anti-rent doctrines is most to be apprehended from these false principles; the misguided and impotent beings who have taken the field in the literal sense, not being a fourth part as formidable to the right as those who have taken it in the moral. There is not a particle more of reason in the argument which says that there should be no farmers, in the strict meaning of the term, than there would be in that which said there should be no journeymen connected with the crafts; though it would not be easy to find a man to assert the latter doctrine. We dare say, if there did happen to exist a portion of the country in which the mechanics were all "bosses," it would strike those who dwelt in such a state of society, that it would be singularly improper and anti-republican for any man to undertake journeywork.

On this subject we shall only add one word. The column of society must have its capital as well as its base. It can scarcely be said that the work was commenced with any view to publication; and when it was finally put into a publisher's hand, with "all its imperfections on its head," the

last thought of the writer was any expectation that it would be followed by a series of similar tales from the same pen.

More than this the public will feel no interest in knowing, and less than this the author could not consent to say, on presenting to the world a reprint of a book with so few claims to notice.

THE CHAINBEARER.

CHAPTER I.

"The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim:
The iron frame, inured to bear
Each dire inclemency of air;
Nor less confirmed to undergo
Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe."

Rokeby.

MY father was Cornelius Littlepage, of Satanstoe, in the county of Westchester, and State of New York; and my mother was Anneke Mordaunt, of Lilacsbush, a place long known by that name, which still stands near King's Bridge, but on the Island of Manhattan, and consequently in one of the wards of New York, though quite eleven miles from town. I shall suppose that my readers know the difference between the Island of Manhattan, and Manhattan Island; though I have found *soi-disant* Manhattanese, of mature years, but of alien birth, who had to be taught it. Lilacsbush, I repeat therefore, was on the Island of Manhattan, eleven miles from town, though in the city of New York, and not on Manhattan Island.

Of my progenitors further back, I do not conceive it necessary to say much. They were partly of English, and partly of Low Dutch extraction; as is apt to be the case with those who come of New York families of any standing in the colony. I retain tolerably distinct impressions of both

my grandfathers, and of one of my grandmothers; my mother's mother having died long before my own parents were married.

Of my maternal grandfather I know very little, however, he having died while I was quite young, and before I had seen much of him. He paid the great debt of nature in England, whither he had gone on a visit to a relative, a Sir Something Bulstrode, who had been in the colonies himself, and who was a great favorite with Herman Mordaunt, as my mother's parent was universally called in New York. My father often said it was perhaps fortunate in one respect, that his father-in-law died as he did, since he had no doubt he would have certainly taken sides with the crown, in the quarrel that so soon after occurred, in which case it is probable his estates, or those which were my mother's, and are now mine, would have shared the fate of those of the De Lanceys, of the Philipses, of some of the Van Cortlandts, of the Floyds, of the Joneses, and of various others of the heavy families, who remained loyal, as it was called; meaning loyalty to a prince, and not loyalty to the land of their nativity. It is hard to say which were right, in such a quarrel, if we look at the opinions and prejudices of the times, though the Littlepages to a man, which means only my father and grandfather and myself, took sides with the country. In the way of self-interest, it ought to be remarked, however, that the wealthy American who opposed the crown showed much the most disinterestedness, inasmuch as the chances of being subdued were for a long time very serious, while the certainty of confiscation, not to say of being hanged, was sufficiently well established, in the event of failure. But my paternal grandfather was what was called a whig, of the high caste. He was made a brigadier in the militia, in 1776, and was actively employed in the great campaign of the succeeding year—that in which Burgoyne was captured, as indeed was my father, who held the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the New York line. There was also a Major Dirck Van Valkenburgh, or Follock, as he was usually called, in the same regiment with my father, who was a sworn friend. This Major Follock was an old

bachelor, and he lived quite as much in my father's house as he did in his own; his proper residence being across the river, in Rockland. My mother had a friend, as well as my father, in the person of Miss Mary Wallace; a single lady, well turned of thirty at the commencement of the Revolution. Miss Wallace was quite at ease in her circumstances, but she lived altogether at Lilacsbush, never having any other home, unless it might be at our house in town.

We were very proud of the brigadier, both on account of his rank and on account of his services. He actually commanded in one expedition against the Indians during the Revolution, a service in which he had some experience, having been out on it, on various occasions, previously to the great struggle for independence. It was in one of these early expeditions of the latter war that he first distinguished himself, being then under the orders of a Colonel Brom Follock, who was the father of Major Dirck of the same name, and who was almost as great a friend of my grandfather as the son was of my own parent. This Colonel Brom loved a carouse, and I have heard it said that, getting among the High Dutch on the Mohawk, he kept it up for a week, with little or no intermission, under circumstances that involved much military negligence. The result was that a party of Canada Indians made an inroad on his command, and the old colonel, who was as bold as a lion and as drunk as a lord,—though why lords are supposed to be particularly inclined to drink I never could tell,—was both shot down and scalped early one morning as he was returning from an adjacent tavern to his quarters in the "garrison" where he was stationed. My grandfather nobly revenged his death, scattering to the four winds the invading party, and receiving the mutilated body of his friend, though the scalp was irretrievably lost.

General Littlepage did not survive the war, though it was not his good fortune to die on the field, thus identifying his name with the history of his country. It happens in all wars, and most especially did it often occur in our own great national struggle, that more soldiers lay down their lives in the hospitals than on the field of battle, though

the shedding of blood seems an indispensable requisite to glory of this nature; an ungrateful posterity taking little heed of the thousands who pass into another state of being, the victims of exposure and camp diseases, to sound the praises of the hundreds who are slain amid the din of battle. Yet it may be questioned if it do not require more true courage to face death when he approaches in the invisible form of disease, than to meet him when openly arrayed under the armed hand. My grandfather's conduct in remaining in camp, among hundreds of those who had the small-pox, the loathsome malady of which he died, was occasionally alluded to, it is true, but never in the manner the death of an officer of his rank would have been mentioned, had he fallen in battle. I could see that Major Follock had an honorable pride in the fate of his father, who was slain and scalped by the enemy in returning from a drunken carouse, while my worthy parent ever referred to the death of the brigadier as an event to be deplored, rather than exulted in. For my own part, I think my grandfather's end was much the more creditable of the two; but as such it will never be viewed by the historian, or the country. As for historians, it requires a man to be singularly honest to write against a prejudice; and it is so much easier to celebrate a deed as it is imagined than as it actually occurred, that I question if we know the truth of a tenth part of the exploits about which we vapor, and in which we fancy we glory. Well! we are taught to believe that the time will come when all things are to be seen in their true colors, and when men and deeds will be known as they actually were, rather than as they have been recorded in the pages of history.

I was too young myself to take much part in the war of the Revolution, though accident made me an eye-witness of some of its most important events, and that at the tender age of fifteen. At twelve—the American intellect ever was and continues to be singularly precocious—I was sent to Nassau Hall, Princeton, to be educated, and I remained there until I finally got a degree, though it was

not without several long and rude interruptions of my studies. Although so early sent to college, I did not actually graduate until I was nineteen, the troubled times requiring nearly twice as long a servitude to make a Bachelor of Arts of me as would have been necessary in the more halcyon days of peace. Thus I made a fragment of a campaign when only a sophomore, and another the first year I was junior. I say the first year, because I was obliged to pass two years in each of the two higher classes of the institution, in order to make up for lost time. A youth cannot very well be campaigning and studying Euclid in the academic bowers, at the same moment. Then I was so young, that a year, more or less, was of no great moment.

My principal service in the war of the Revolution was in 1777, or in the campaign in which Burgoyne was met and captured. That important service was performed by a force that was composed partly of regular troops, and partly of militia. My grandfather commanded a brigade of the last, or what was called a brigade, some six hundred men at most; while my father led a regular battalion of one hundred and sixty troops of the New York line into the German intrenchments, the memorable and bloody day the last were stormed. How many he brought out I never heard him say. The way in which I happened to be present in these important scenes is soon told.

Lilacsbush being on the Island of Manhattan (not Manhattan Island, be it always remembered), and our family being whig, we were driven from both our town and country houses the moment Sir William Howe took possession of New York. At first my mother was content with merely going to Satanstoe, which was only a short distance from the enemy's lines; but the political character of the Littlepages being too well established to render this a safe residence, my grandmother and mother, always accompanied by Miss Wallace, went up above the Highlands, where they established themselves in the village of Fishkill for the remainder of the war, on a farm that belonged to Miss Wallace in fee. Here it was thought they were

safe, being seventy miles from the capital, and quite within the American lines. As this removal took place at the close of the year 1776, and after independence had been declared, it was understood that our return to our proper homes at all depended on the result of the war. At that time I was a sophomore, and at home in the long vacation. It was in this visit that I made my fragment of a campaign, accompanying my father through all the closing movements of his regiment, while Washington and Howe were manœuvring in Westchester. My father's battalion happening to be posted in such a manner as to be in the centre of the battle at White Plains, I had an opportunity of seeing some pretty serious service on that occasion. Nor did I quit the army and return to my studies until after the brilliant affairs at Trenton and Princeton, in both of which our regiment participated.

This was a pretty early commencement with the things of active life for a boy of fourteen. But in that war, lads of my age often carried muskets, for the colonies covered a great extent of country, and had but few people. They who read of the war of the American Revolution, and view its campaigns and battles as they would regard the conflicts of older and more advanced nations, can form no just notion of the disadvantages with which our people had to contend, or the great superiority of the enemy in all the usual elements of military force. Without experienced officers, with but few and indifferent arms, often in want of ammunition, the rural and otherwise peaceful population of a thinly peopled country were brought in conflict with the chosen warriors of Europe; and this, too, with little or none of that great sinew of war, money, to sustain them. Nevertheless the Americans, unaided by any foreign skill or succor, were about as often successful as the reverse. Bunker Hill, Bennington, Saratoga, Bemus' Heights, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, were all purely American battles; to say nothing of divers others that occurred farther south; and though insignificant as to numbers, compared with the conflicts of these later times, each is worthy of a place in history, and one or two are

almost without parallels; as is seen when Bunker Hill is named. It sounds very well in a despatch, to swell out the list of an enemy's ranks; but admitting the number itself not to be overrated, as so often occurred, of what avail are men without arms and ammunition, and frequently without any other military organization than a master-roll!

I have said I made nearly the whole of the campaign in which Burgoyne was taken. It happened in this wise. The service of the previous year had a good deal indisposed me to study, and when again at home in the autumn vacation, my dear mother sent me with clothing and supplies to my father, who was with the army at the north. I reached the head-quarters of General Gates a week before the affair of Bemus' Heights, and was with my father until the capitulation was completed. Owing to these circumstances, though still a boy in years, I was an eye-witness, and in some measure an actor in two or three of the most important events in the whole war. Being well grown for my years, and of a somewhat manly appearance, considering how young I really was, I passed very well as a volunteer, being, I have reason to think, somewhat of a favorite in the regiment. In the last battle, I had the honor to act as a sort of aid-de-camp to my grandfather, who sent me with orders and messages two or three times into the midst of the fire. In this manner I made myself a little known, and all so much the more from the circumstance of my being in fact nothing but a college lad, away from his *alma mater* during vacation.

It was but natural that a boy thus situated should attract some little attention, and I was noticed by officers, who, under other circumstances, would hardly have felt it necessary to go out of their way to speak to me. The Littlepages had stood well, I have reason to think, in the colony, and their position in the new State was not likely to be at all lowered by the part they were now playing in the Revolution. I am far from certain that General Littlepage was considered a corner-post in the Temple of Freedom that the army was endeavoring to rear, but he was quite

respectable as a militia officer, while my father was very generally admitted to be one of the best lieutenant-colonels in the whole army.

I well remember to have been much struck with a captain in my father's regiment, who certainly was a character, in his way. His origin was Dutch, as was the case with a fair proportion of the officers, and he bore the name of Andries Coejemans, though he was universally known by the *sobriquet* of the "Chainbearer." It was fortunate for him it was so, else would the Yankees in the camp, who seem to have a mania to pronounce every word as it is spelled, and having succeeded in this, to change the spelling of the whole language to accommodate it to certain sounds of their own inventing, would have given him a most unpronounceable appellation. Heaven only knows what they would have called Captain Coejemans, but for this lucky nickname; but it may be as well to let the uninitiated understand at once, that in New York parlance Coejemans is called Queemans. The Chainbearer was of a respectable Dutch family, one that has even given its queer-looking name to a place of some little note on the Hudson; but, as was very apt to be the case with the cadets of such houses, in the good old time of the colony, his education was no great matter. His means had once been respectable, but as he always maintained, he was cheated out of his substance by a Yankee before he was three-and-twenty, and he had recourse to surveying for a living from that time. But Andries had no head for mathematics, and after making one or two notable blunders in the way of his new profession, he quietly sunk to the station of a chainbearer, in which capacity he was known to all the leading men of his craft in the colony. It is said that every man is suited to some pursuit or other, in which he might acquire credit, would he only enter on it and persevere. Thus it proved to be with Andries Coejemans. As a chainbearer he had an unrivalled reputation. Humble as was the occupation, it admitted of excellence in various particulars, as well as another. In the first place, it required honesty, a quality in which this class of men can fail, as well as all the rest of mankind. Neither colony

nor patentee, landlord nor tenant, buyer nor seller, need be uneasy about being fairly dealt by so long as Andries Coejemans held the forward end of the chain; a duty on which he was invariably placed by one party or the other. Then, a practical eye was a great aid to positive measurement; and while Andries never swerved to the right or to the left of his course, having acquired a sort of instinct in his calling, much time and labor were saved. In addition to these advantages, the Chainbearer had acquired great skill in all the subordinate matters of his calling. He was a capital woodman, generally; had become a good hunter, and had acquired most of the habits that pursuits like those in which he was engaged for so many years previously to entering the army would be likely to give a man. In the course of time, he took patents to survey, employing men with heads better than his own to act as principals, while he still carried the chain.

At the commencement of the Revolution, Andries, like most of those who sympathized with the colonies, took up arms. When the regiment of which my father was the lieutenant-colonel was raised, they who could bring to its colors so many men received commissions of a rank proportioned to their services in this respect. Andries had presented himself early with a considerable squad of chainbearers, hunters, trappers, runners, guides, etc., numbering in the whole something like five-and-twenty hardy, resolute sharpshooters. Their leader was made a lieutenant in consequence, and being the oldest of his rank in the corps, he was shortly after promoted to a captaincy, the station he was in when I made his acquaintance, and above which he never rose.

Revolutions, more especially such as are of a popular character, are not remarkable for bringing forward those who are highly educated, or otherwise fitted for their new stations, unless it may be on the score of zeal. It is true, service generally classes men, bringing out their qualities, and necessity soon compels the preferment of those who are the best qualified. Our own great national struggle, however, probably did less of this than any similar event of

modern times, a respectable mediocrity having accordingly obtained an elevation that, as a rule, it was enabled to keep to the close of the war. It is a singular fact that not a solitary instance is to be found in our military annals of a young soldier's rising to high command, by the force of his talents, in all that struggle. This may have been, and in a measure probably was owing to the opinions of the people, and to the circumstance that the service itself was one that demanded greater prudence and circumspection than qualities of a more dazzling nature; or the qualifications of age and experience, rather than those of youth and enterprise. It is probable Andries Coejemans, on the score of original station, was rather above than below the level of the social positions of a majority of the subalterns of the different lines of the more northern colonies, when he first joined the army. It is true, his education was not equal to his birth; for, in that day, except in isolated instances and particular families, the Dutch of New York, even in cases in which money was not wanting, were anything but scholars. In this particular, our neighbors the Yankees had greatly the advantage of us. They sent everybody to school, and, though their educations were principally those of smatterers, it is an advantage to be even a smatterer among the very ignorant. Andries had been no student either, and one may easily imagine what indifferent cultivation will effect on a naturally thin soil. He could read and write, it is true, but it was the ciphering under which he broke down, as a surveyor. I have often heard him say, that "if land could be measured without figures, he would turn his back on no man in the calling in all America, unless it might be 'his Excellency,' who, he made no doubt, was not only the best, but the honestest surveyor mankind had ever enjoyed."

The circumstance that Washington had practised the art of a surveyor for a short time in his early youth, was a source of great exultation with Andries Coejemans. He felt that it was an honor to be even a subordinate in a pursuit in which such a man was a principal. I remember that long after we were at Saratoga together, Captain

Coejemans, while we were before Yorktown, pointed to the commander-in-chief one day, as the latter rode past our encampment, and cried out, with emphasis, "T'ere, Mortaunt, my poy—t'ere goes his Excellency! It would be t'e happiest tay of my life, coult I only carry chain while he survey't a pit of a farm, in this neighborpoot."

Andries was more or less Dutch in his dialect, as he was more or less interested. In general, he spoke English pretty well—colony English, I mean, not that of the schools; though he had not a single Yankeeism in his vocabulary. On this last point, he prided himself greatly, feeling an honest pride, if he did occasionally use vulgarisms, a vicious pronunciation, or make a mistake in the meaning of a word, a sin he was a little apt to commit; and that his faults were all honest New York mistakes, and no "New England gipperish." In the course of the various visits I paid to the camp, Andries and myself became quite intimate, his peculiarities seizing my fancy; and, doubtless, my obvious admiration awakening his gratitude. In the course of our many conversations, he gave me his whole history, commencing with the emigration of the Coejemans from Holland, and ending with our actual situation, in the camp at Saratoga. Andries had been often engaged, and, before the war terminated, I could boast of having been at his side in no less than six affairs myself, namely, White Plains, Trenton, Princeton, Bemus' Heights, Monmouth, and Brandywine; for I had stolen away from college to be present at the last affair. The circumstance that our regiment was both with Washington and Gates, was owing to the noble qualities of the former, who sent off some of his best troops to reinforce his rival, as things gathered to a head at the north. Then I was present throughout, at the siege of Yorktown. But it is not my intention to enlarge on my own military services.

While at Saratoga, I was much struck with the air, position, and deportment of a gentleman who appeared to command the respect, and to obtain the ears of all the leaders in the American camp, while he held no apparent official station. He wore no uniform, though he was addressed by

the title of general, and had much more of the character of a real soldier than Gates, who commanded. He must have been between forty and fifty at that time, and in the full enjoyment of the vigor of his mind and body. This was Philip Schuyler, so justly celebrated in our annals for his wisdom, patriotism, integrity, and public services. His connection with the great northern campaign is too well known to require any explanations here. Its success, perhaps, was more owing to his advice and preparations than to the influence of any one other mind, and he is beginning already to take a place in history, in connection with these great events, that has a singular resemblance to that he occupied during their actual occurrence; in other words, he is to be seen in the background of the great national picture, unobtrusive and modest, but directing and controlling all, by the power of his intellect, and the influence of his experience and character. Gates [1] was but a secondary personage in the real events of that memorable period. Schuyler was the presiding spirit, though forced by popular prejudice to retire from the apparent command of the army. Our written accounts ascribe the difficulty that worked this injustice to Schuyler, to a prejudice which existed among the Eastern militia, and which is supposed to have had its origin in the disasters of St. Clair; or the reverses which attended the earlier movements of the campaign. My father, who had known General Schuyler in the war of '56, when he acted as Bradstreet's right-hand man, attributed the feeling to a different cause. According to his notion of the alienation, it was owing to the difference in habits and opinions which existed between Schuyler, as a New York gentleman, and the yeomen of New England, who came out in 1777, imbued with all the distinctive notions of their very peculiar state of society. There may have been prejudices on both sides, but it is easy to see which party exhibited most magnanimity and self-sacrifice. Possibly, the last was inseparable from the preponderance

[1] It may not be amiss to remark, in passing, that Horace Walpole, in one of his recently published letters, speaks of a Horatio Gates as his godson. Walpole was born in 1718, and Gates in 1728.

of numbers, it not being an easy thing to persuade masses of men that they can be wrong, and a single individual right. This is the great error of democracy, which fancies truth is to be proved by counting noses; while aristocracy commits the antagonist blunder of believing that excellence is inherited from male to male, and that too in the order of primogeniture! It is not easy to say where one is to look for truth in this life.

As for General Schuyler, I have thought my father was right in ascribing his unpopularity solely to the prejudices of provinces. The Muse of History is the most ambitious of the whole sisterhood, and never thinks she has done her duty unless all she says and records is said and recorded with an air of profound philosophy; whereas, more than half of the greatest events which affect human interest are to be referred to causes that have little connection with our boasted intelligence, in any shape. Men feel far more than they reason, and a little feeling is very apt to upset a great deal of philosophy.

It has been said that I passed six years at Princeton; nominally, if not in fact; and that I graduated at nineteen. This happened the year Cornwallis surrendered, and I actually served at the siege as the youngest ensign in my father's battalion. I had also the happiness, for such it was to me, to be attached to the company of Captain Coejemans, a circumstance which clenched the friendship I had formed for that singular old man. I say old, for by this time Andries was every hour of sixty-seven, though as hale, and hearty, and active, as any officer in the corps. As for hardships, forty years of training, most of which had been passed in the woods, placed him quite at our head, in the way of endurance.

I loved my predecessors, grandfather and grandmother included, not only as a matter of course, but with sincere filial attachment; and I loved Miss Mary Wallace, or Aunt Mary, as I had been taught to call her, quite as much on account of her quiet, gentle, affectionate manner, as from habit; and I loved Major Dirck Follock as a sort of hereditary friend, as a distant relative, and a good and careful

guardian of my own youth and inexperience on a thousand occasions; and I loved my father's negro man, Jaap, as we all love faithful slaves, however unnurtured they may be; but Andries was a man whom I loved without knowing why. He was illiterate almost to greatness, having the drollest notions imaginable of this earth and all it contained; was anything but refined in deportment, though hearty and frank; had prejudices so crammed into his moral system that there did not seem to be room for anything else; and was ever so little addicted, moreover, to that species of Dutch jollification which had cost old Colonel Van Valkenburgh his life, and a love for which was a good deal spread throughout the colony. Nevertheless, I really loved this man, and when we were all disbanded at the peace, or in 1783, by which time I had myself risen to the rank of captain, I actually parted from old Andries with tears in my eyes. My grandfather, General Littlepage, was then dead, but government giving to most of us a step, by means of brevet rank, at the final breaking up of the army, my father, who had been the full colonel of the regiment for the last year, bore the title of brigadier for the remainder of his days. It was pretty much all he got for seven years of dangers and arduous services. But the country was poor, and we had fought more for principles than for the hope of rewards. It must be admitted that America ought to be full of philosophy, inasmuch as so much of her system of rewards and even of punishments is purely theoretical, and addressed to the imagination, or to the qualities of the mind. Thus it is, that we contend with all our enemies on very unequal grounds. The Englishman has his knighthood, his baronetcies, his peerages, his orders, his higher ranks in the professions, his *batons*, and all the other venial inducements of our corrupt nature to make him fight, while the American is goaded on to glory by the abstract considerations of virtue and patriotism. After all, we flog quite as often as we are flogged, which is the main interest affected. While on this subject I will remark that Andries Coejemans never assumed the empty title of major, which

was so graciously bestowed on him by the Congress of 1783, but left the army a captain in name, without half-pay, or anything but his military lot, to find a niece whom he was bringing up, and to pursue his old business of a chainbearer.

CHAPTER II.

"A trusty villain, sir; that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humors with his many jests."
Dromio of Syracuse.

IT will be seen that, while I got a degree, and what is called an education, the latter was obtained by studies of a very desultory character. There is no question that learning of all sorts fell off sadly among us during the Revolution and the twenty years that succeeded it. While colonies, we possessed many excellent instructors who came from Europe; but the supply ceased, in a great measure, as soon as the troubles commenced; nor was it immediately renewed at the peace. I think it will be admitted that the gentlemen of the country began to be less well educated about the time I was sent to college, than had been the case for the previous half-century, and that the defect has not yet been repaired. What the country may do in the first half of the nineteenth century remains to be seen.[1]

My connection with the army aided materially in weaning me from home, though few youths had as many temptations to return to the paternal roof as myself. There were my beloved mother and my grandmother, in the first place,

[1] The reader will recollect that Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage must have written this account of himself and his times, about the close of the last, or the beginning of this century. Since that time, education has certainly advanced among us; sophomores pursuing branches of learning to-day, that were sealed from seniors a few years since. Learning, however, advanced in this country on the great American principle of imparting a little to a great many, instead of teaching a good deal to a few.—EDITOR.

both of whom doted on me as on an only son. Then Aunt Mary almost equally shared in my affections. But I had two sisters, one of whom was older, and the other younger than myself. The eldest, who was called Anneke, after our dear mother, was even six years my senior, and was married early in the war to a gentleman of the name of Kettletas. Mr. Kettletas was a person of very good estate, and made my sister perfectly happy. They had several children, and resided in Dutchess, which was an additional reason for my mother's choosing that county for her temporary residence. I regarded Anneke, or Mrs. Kettletas, much as all youths regard an elder sister, who is affectionate, feminine, and respectable; but little Katrinke, or Kate, was my pet. She again was four years younger than myself; and as I was just two-and-twenty when the army was disbanded, she of course was only eighteen. This dear sister was a little, jumping, laughing, never-quiet, merry thing, when I had taken my leave of her, in 1781, to join the regiment as an ensign, as handsome and sweet as a rose-bud, and quite as full of promise. I remember that old Andries and I used to pass much of our time in camp, in conversing about our several pets; he of his niece, and I of my younger sister. Of course I never intended to marry, but Kate and I were to live together; she as my housekeeper and companion, and I as her elder brother and protector. The one great good of life with us all was peace, with independence; which obtained, no one, in our regiment at least, was so little of a patriot as to doubt of the future. It was laughable to see with how much gusto and simplicity the old Chainbearer entered into all these boyish schemes. His niece was an orphan, it would seem, the only child of an only but a half sister, and was absolutely dependent on him for the bread she put into her mouth. It is true that this niece fared somewhat better than such a support would seem to promise, having been much cared for by a female friend of her mother's, who, being reduced herself, kept a school, and had thus bestowed on her ward a far better education than she could ever have got under her uncle's supervision, had the last possessed the riches of

the Van Rensselaers or of the Van Cortlandts. As has been substantially stated, old Andries' forte did not lie in education, and they who do not enjoy the blessings of such a character seldom duly appreciate their advantages. It is with the acquisitions of the mind, as with those of mere deportment and tastes; we are apt to undervalue them all, until made familiarly acquainted with their power to elevate and to enlarge. But the niece of Andries had been particularly fortunate in falling into the hands she had; Mrs. Stratton having the means and the inclination to do all for her, in the way of instruction, that was then done for any young woman in New York, as long as she lived. The death of this kind friend occurring, however, in 1783, Andries was obliged to resume the care of his niece, who was now thrown entirely on himself for support. It is true, the girl wished to do something for herself, but this neither the pride nor the affection of the old Chainbearer would listen to.

"What can the gal do?" Andries said to me significantly, one day that he was recounting all these particulars. "She can't carry chain, though I do believe, Morty, the chilt has head enough, and figures enough to survey! It would do your heart good to read the account of her l'arnin' t'at t'e olt woman used to send me; though she wrote so excellent a hant herself, t'at it commonly took me a week to read one of her letters; that is, from 'Respected Friend' to 'Humble Sarvent,' as you know them 'ere t'ings go."

"Excellent hand! Why, I should think, Andries, the better the hand, the easier one could read a letter."

"All a mistake. When a man writes a scrawl himself, it 's nat'ral he shoult read scrawls easiest, in his own case. Now, Mrs. Stratton was home-taught, and would be likely to get into ways t'at a plain man might find difficult to get along wit'."

"Did you think, then, of making a surveyor of your niece?" I asked a little pointedly.

"Why, she is hartly strong enough to travel t'rough the woots, and the callin' is not suitaple to her sex, t'ough I woult risk her against t'e oldest calculator in t'e province."

"We call New York a State, now, Captain Andries, you will recollect."

"Ay, t'at's true, and I peg the State's pardon. Well, t'ere'll be scrambling enough for t'e land, as soon as the war is fairly over, and chainbearing will be a sarviceable callin', once more. Do you know, Morty, they talk of gifin' all of our line a quantity of land, privates and officers, which will make me a landholter again, the very character in which I started in life. You will inherit acres enough, and may not care so much apout owning a few huntret, more or less, but I own the idee is agreeaple enough to me."

"Do you propose to commence anew as a husbandman?"

"Not I; the pusiness never agreet wit' me, nor I wit' it. Put a man may survey his own lot, I suppose, and no offence to greater scholars. If I get t'e grant t'ey speak of, I shall set to work and run it out on my own account, and t'en we shall see who understants figures, and who don't! If other people won't trust me, it is no reason I shoult not trust myself."

I knew that his having broken down in the more intellectual part of his calling was a sore point with old Andries, and I avoided dwelling on this part of the subject. In order to divert his mind to other objects, indeed, I began to question him a little more closely than I had ever done before, on the subject of his niece, in consequence of which expedient I now learned many things that were new to me.

The name of the Chainbearer's niece was Dus Malbone, or so he always pronounced it. In the end I discovered that Dus was a sort of Dutch diminutive for Ursula. Ursula Malbone had none of the Coejemans blood in her, notwithstanding she was Andries' sister's daughter. It seemed that old Mrs. Coejemans was twice married, her second husband being the father of Dus' mother. Bob Malbone, as the Chainbearer always called the girl's father, was an Eastern man of very good family, but was a reckless spendthrift, who married Dus the senior, as well as I could learn, for her property; all of which, as well as that he had inherited

himself, was cleverly gotten rid of within the first ten years of their union, and a year or two after the girl was born. Both father and mother died within a few months of each other, and in a very happy moment as regards worldly means, leaving poor little Dus with no one to care for her but her half-uncle, who was then living in the forest in his regular pursuits, and the Mrs. Stratton I have mentioned. There was a half-brother, Bob Malbone having married twice, but he was in the army, and had some near female relation to support out of his pay. Between the Chainbearer and Mrs. Stratton, with an occasional offering from the brother, the means of clothing, nourishing, and educating the young woman had been found until she reached her eighteenth year, when the death of her female protector threw her nearly altogether on the care of her uncle. The brother now did his share, Andries admitted; but it was not much that he could do. A captain himself, his scanty pay barely sufficed to meet his own wants.

I could easily see that old Andries loved Dus better than anything else or any other person. When he was a little mellow, and that was usually the extent of his debaucheries, he would prate about her to me until the tears came into his eyes, and once he actually proposed that I should marry her.

"You woult just suit each other," the old man added, in a very quaint but earnest manner, on that memorable occasion; "and as for property, I know you care little for money, and will have enough for half a tozen. I swear to you, Captain Littlepage,"—for this dialogue took place only a few months before we were disbanded, and after I had obtained a company,—"I swear to you, Captain Littlepage, t'e girl is laughing from morning till night, and would make one of the merriest companions for an olt soldier that ever promiset to 'honer and opey.' Try her once, lad, and see if I teceive you."

"That may do well enough, friend Andries, for an old soldier, whereas you will remember I am but a boy in years—"

"Ay, in years, but olt as a soldier, Morty—olt as

White Plains, or '76; as I know from hafin' seen you unter fire."

"Well, be it so; but it is the man, and not the soldier, who is to do the marrying, and I am still a very young man."

"You might do worse, take my word for it, Mortaunt, my dear poy; for Dus is fun itself, and I have often spoken of you to her in a way t'at will make the courtship as easy as carrying a chain on t'e Jarmen Flats."

I assured my friend Andries that I did not think of a wife yet, and that my taste ran for a sentimental and melancholy young woman, rather than for a laughing girl. The old Chainbearer took this repulse good-humoredly, though he renewed the attack at least a dozen times before the regiment was disbanded, and we finally separated. I say finally separated, though it was in reference to our companionship as soldiers, rather than as to our future lives; for I had determined to give Andries employment myself, should nothing better offer in his behalf.

Nor was I altogether without the means of thus serving a friend, when the inclination existed. My grandfather, Herman Mordaunt, had left me, to come into possession at the age of twenty-one, a considerable estate in what is now Washington County, a portion of our territory that lies northeast from Albany, and at no great distance from the Hampshire Grants. This property, of many thousands of acres in extent, had been partially settled under leases by himself, previously to my birth, and those leases having mostly expired, the tenants were remaining at will, waiting for more quiet times to renew their engagements. As yet Ravensnest, for so the estate was called, had given the family little beside expense and trouble; but the land being good, and the improvements considerable, it was time to look for some return for all our outlays. This estate was now mine in fee, my father having formally relinquished its possession in my favor the day I attained my majority. Adjacent to this estate lay that of Mooseridge, which was the joint property of my father and of his friend Major—or as he was styled in virtue of the

brevet rank granted at the peace—Colonel Follock. Mooseridge had been originally patented by my grandfather, the first General Littlepage, and old Colonel Follock, he who had been slain and scalped early in the war; but on the descent of his moiety of the tenantry in common to Dirck Follock, my grandfather conveyed his interest to his own son, who ere long must become its owner agreeably to the laws of nature. This property had once been surveyed into large lots, but owing to some adverse circumstances, and the approach of the troubles, it had never been settled, or surveyed into farms. All that its owners ever got for it, therefore, was the privilege of paying the crown its quit-rents; taxes, or reserved payments, of no great amount, it is true, though far more than the estate had ever yet returned.

While on the subject of lands and tenements, I may as well finish my opening explanations. My paternal grandfather was by no means as rich as my father, though the senior, and of so much higher military rank. His property, or neck, of Satanstoe, nevertheless was quite valuable; more for the quality of the land and its position, than for its extent. In addition to this, he had a few thousand pounds at interest; stocks, banks, and moneyed corporations of all kinds being then nearly unknown among us. His means were sufficient for his wants, however, and it was a joyful day when he found himself enabled to take possession of his own house again, in consequence of Sir Guy Carleton's calling in all of his detachments from Westchester. The Morrises, distinguished whigs as they were, did not get back to Morrisania until after the evacuation, which took place November 25, 1783; nor did my father return to Lilacsbush until after that important event. The very year my grandfather saw Satanstoe, he took the small-pox in camp and died.

To own the truth, the peace found us all very poor, as was the case with almost everybody in the country but a few contractors. It was not the contractors for the American army that were rich; they fared worse than most people; but the few who furnished supplies to the French did get silver in return for their advances. As for the

army, it was disbanded without any reward but promises, and payment in a currency that depreciated so rapidly that men were glad to spend recklessly their hard-earned stock, lest it should become perfectly valueless in their hands. I have heard much in later years of the celebrated Newburgh letters, and of the want of patriotism that could lead to their having been written. It may not have been wise, considering the absolute want of the country, to have contemplated the alternative toward which those letters certainly cast an oblique glance, but there was nothing in either their execution or their drift which was not perfectly natural for the circumstances. It was quite right for Washington to act as he did in that crisis, though it is highly probable that even Washington would have felt and acted differently, had he nothing but the keen sense of his neglected services, poverty, and forgetfulness before him, in the perspective. As for the young officer who actually wrote the letters, it is probable that justice will never be done to any part of his conduct, but that which is connected with the elegance of his diction. It is very well for those who do not suffer to prate about patriotism; but a country is bound to be just, before it can lay a high moral claim to this exclusive devotedness to the interests of the majority. Fine words cost but little, and I acknowledge no great respect for those who manifest their integrity principally in phrases. This is said not in the way of personal apology, for our regiment did not happen to be at Newburgh at the disbandment; if it had, I think my father's influence would have kept us from joining the malcontents; but at the same time, I fancy his and my own patriotism would have been much strengthened by the knowledge that there were such places as Satanstoe, Lilacsbush, Mooseridge, and Ravensnest. To return to the account of our property.

My grandfather Mordaunt, notwithstanding his handsome bequests to me, left the bulk of his estate to my mother. This would have made the rest of the family rich, had it not been for the dilapidations produced by the war. But the houses and stores in town were without

tenants who paid, having been mainly occupied by the enemy; and interest on bonds was hard to collect from those who lived within the British lines.

In a word, it is not easy to impress on the mind of one who witnesses the present state of the country, its actual condition in that day. As an incident that occurred to myself, after I had regularly joined the army for duty, will afford a lively picture of the state of things, I will relate it, and this the more willingly, as it will be the means of introducing to the reader an old friend of the family, and one who was intimately associated with divers events of my own life. I have spoken of Jaap, a slave of my father, and one of about his own time of life. At the time to which I allude, Jaap was a middle-aged, gray-headed negro, with most of the faults, and with all the peculiar virtues of the beings of his condition and race. So much reliance had my mother, in particular, on his fidelity, that she insisted on his accompanying her husband to the wars, an order that the black most willingly obeyed; not only because he loved adventure, but because he especially hated an Indian, and my father's earliest service was against that portion of our foes. Although Jaap acted as a body-servant, he carried a musket, and even drilled with the men. Luckily, the Littlepage livery was blue turned up with red, and of a very modest character; a circumstance that almost put Jaap in uniform, the fellow obstinately refusing to wear the colors of any power but that of the family to which he regularly belonged. In this manner, Jaap had got to be a queer mixture of the servant and the soldier, sometimes acting in the one capacity, and sometimes in the other, having at the same time not a little of the husbandman about him; for our slaves did all sorts of work.

My mother had made it a point that Jaap should accompany me on all occasions when I was sent to any distance from my father. She naturally enough supposed I had the most need of the care of a faithful attendant, and the black had consequently got to be about half transferred to me. He evidently liked this change, both because it

was always accompanied by change of scene and the chances for new adventures, and because it gave him an opportunity of relating many of the events of his youth; events that had got to be worn threadbare, as narratives, with his "ole massa," but which were still fresh with his "young."

On the occasion to which there is allusion, Jaap and I were returning to camp, from an excursion of some length, on which I had been sent by the general of division. This was about the time the continental money made its final fall to nothing, or next to nothing, it having long stood at about a hundred dollars for one. I had provided myself with a little silver, and very precious it was, and some thirty or forty thousand dollars of "continental," to defray my travelling expenses; but my silver was expended, and the paper reduced to two or three thousand dollars, when it would require the whole stock of the latter to pay for Jaap's and my own dinner; nor were the innkeepers very willing to give their time and food for it at any price. This vacuum in my purse took place when I had still two long days' ride before me, and in a part of the country where I had no acquaintances whatever. Supper and rest were needed for ourselves, and provender and stabling for our horses. Everything of the sort was cheap enough, to be sure, but absolute want of means rendered the smallest charge impracticable to persons in our situation. As for appealing to the patriotism of those who lived by the way-side, it was too late in the war; patriotism being a very evanescent quality of the human heart, and particularly addicted to sneaking, like compassion, behind some convenient cover, when it is to be maintained at any pecuniary cost. It will do for a capital, in a revolution, or a war for the first six months perhaps; but gets to be as worthless as continental money itself, by the end of that period. One militia draft has exhausted the patriotism of thousands of as disinterested heroes as ever shouldered muskets.

"Jaap,"—I asked of my companion, as we drew near to the hamlet where I intended to pass the night, and the com-

forts of a warm supper on a sharp frosty evening began to haunt my imagination—"Jaap, how much money may you have about you?" [1]

"I, Massa Mordaunt!—golly! but dat a berry droll question, sah!"

"I ask, because my own stock is reduced to just one York shilling, which goes by the name of only a ninepence in this part of the world."

"Dat berry little, to tell 'e trut', sah, for two gentleum, and two large, hungry hosses. Berry little indeed, sah! I wish he war' more."

"Yet, I have not a copper more. I gave one thousand two hundred dollars for the dinner and baiting and oats, at noon."

"Yes, sah—but dat conternental, sah, I supposes—no great t'ing a'ter all."

"It 's a great thing in sound, Jaap, but not much when it comes to the teeth, as you perceive. Nevertheless, we must eat and drink, and our nags must eat too—I suppose *they* may *drink*, without paying."

"Yes, sah—dat true 'nough, yah, yah, yah!"—how easily that negro laughed! "But 'e cider wonnerful good in dis part of 'e country, young massa; just needer sweet nor sour—den he strong as 'e jackass."

"Well, Jaap, how are we to get any of this good cider of which you speak?"

"You t'ink, sah, dis part of 'e country been talk to much lately 'about Patty Rism and 'e country, sah?"

"I am afraid Patty has been overdone here, as well as in other counties."

I may observe here, that Jaap always imagined the beautiful creature he had heard so much extolled, and commended for her comeliness and virtue, was a certain young woman of this name, with whom all Congress was unaccountably in love at the same time.

"Well, den, sah, dere no hope but our wits. Let me be massa to-night, and you mind ole Jaap, if he want good

[1] This man is indiscriminately called Yaf, or Yop—York Dutch being far from severe.

supper. Jest ride ahead, Massa Mordaunt, and give the order like General Littlepage son, and leave it all to ole Jaap."

As there was not much to choose, I did ride on, and soon ceased to hear the hoofs of the negro's horse at my heels. I reached the inn an hour ere Jaap appeared, and was actually seated at a capital supper before he rode up, as one belonging only to himself. Jaap had taken off the Littlepage emblems, and had altogether a most independent air. His horse was stabled alongside of mine, and I soon found that he himself was at work on the remnants of my supper, as they retreated toward the kitchen.

A traveller of my appearance was accommodated with the best parlor, as a matter of course; and having appeased my appetite, I sat down to read some documents that were connected with the duty I was on. No one could have imagined that I had only a York shilling, which is a Pennsylvania "levy," or a Connecticut "ninepence," in my purse; for my air was that of one who could pay for all he wanted, the certainty that, in the long run, my host could not be a loser, giving me a proper degree of confidence. I had just got through with the documents, and was thinking how I should employ the hour or two that remained until it would be time to go to bed, when I heard Jaap tuning his fiddle in the bar-room. Like most negroes, the fellow had an ear for music, and had been indulged in his taste, until he played as well as half the country fiddlers that were to be met.

The sound of a fiddle in a small hamlet, of a cool October evening, was certain of its result. In half an hour the smiling landlady came to invite me to join the company, with the grateful information I should not want for a partner, the prettiest girl in the place having come in late, and being still unprovided for. On entering the bar-room I was received with plenty of awkward bows and courtesies, but with much simple and well-meaning hospitality. Jaap's own salutations were very elaborate, and altogether of a character to prevent the suspicion of our ever having met before.

The dancing continued for more than two hours, with spirit, when the time admonished the village maidens of the necessity of retiring. Seeing an indication of the approaching separation, Jaap held out his hat to me, in a respectful manner, when I magnificently dropped my shilling into it, in a way to attract attention, and passed it around among the males of the party. One other gave a shilling, two clubbed and actually produced a quarter, several threw in sixpences, or fourpence-halfpennies, and coppers made up the balance. By way of climax, the landlady, who was good-looking and loved dancing, publicly announced that the fiddler and his horse should go scot free, until he left the place. By these ingenious means of Jaap's, I found in my purse next morning seven-and-sixpence in silver, in addition to my own shilling, besides coppers enough to keep a negro in cider for a week.

I have often laughed over Jaap's management, though I would not permit him to repeat it. Passing the house of a man of better condition than common, I presented myself to its owner, though an entire stranger to him, and told him my story. Without asking any other confirmation than my word, this gentleman lent me five silver dollars, which answered all my present purposes, and which, I trust it is scarcely necessary to say, were duly repaid.

It was a happy hour to me when I found myself a titular major, but virtually a freeman, and at liberty to go where I pleased. The war had offered so little of variety or adventure, since the capture of Cornwallis and the pendency of the negotiations for peace, that I began to tire of the army; and now that the country had triumphed, was ready enough to quit it. The family, that is to say, my grandmother, mother, Aunt Mary, and my youngest sister, took possession of Satanstoe in time to enjoy some of its delicious fruits in the autumn of 1782; and early in the following season, after the treaty was signed, but while the British still remained in town, my mother was enabled to return to Lilacsbush. As consequences of these early movements, my father and myself, when we joined the two families, found things in a better state than might otherwise have been the

case. The Neck was planted, and had enjoyed the advantage of a spring's husbandry, while the grounds of Lilacsbush had been renovated and brought in good condition by the matured and practised taste of my admirable mother. And she was admirable, in all the relations of life! A lady in feeling and habits, whatever she touched or controlled imbibed a portion of her delicacy and sentiment. Even the inanimate things around her betrayed this feature of their connection with one of her sex's best qualities. I remember that Colonel Dirck Follock remarked to me, one day that we had been examining the offices together, something that was very applicable to this trait in my mother's character, while it was perfectly just.

"No one can see Mrs. Littlepage's kitchen, even," he said, "alt'ough she never seems to enter it, without perceiving"—or "perceifing," as he pronounced the word—"that it is governed by a lady. There are plenty of kitchens that are as clean, and as large, and as well furnished, but it is not common to see a kitchen that gives the same ideas of a good taste in the table, and about the household."

If this was true as to the more homely parts of the habitation, how much truer was it when the distinction was carried into the superior apartments! There, one saw my mother in person, and surrounded by those appliances which denote refinement, without, however, any of that elaborate luxury of which we read in older countries. In America, we had much fine china, and a good deal of massive plate, regular dinner-services excepted, previously to the Revolution, and my mother had inherited more than was usual of both; but the country knew little of that degree of domestic indulgence which is fast creeping in among us, by means of its enormously increased commerce.

Although the fortunes of the country had undergone so much waste during seven years of internal warfare, the elasticity of a young and vigorous nation soon began to repair the evil. It is true that trade did not fully revive, nor its connecting interests receive their great impulse, until after the adoption of the Constitution, which brought the States under a set of common custom-house regulations; never-

theless, one year brought about a manifest and most beneficent change. There was now some security in making shipments, and the country immediately felt the consequences. The year 1784 was a sort of breathing-time for the nation, though long ere it was past the bone and sinew of the Republic began to make themselves apparent and felt. Then it was that, as a people, this community first learned the immense advantage it had obtained by controlling its own interests, and by treating them as secondary to those of no other part of the world. This was the great gain of all our labors.

CHAPTER III.

"He tells her something,
That makes her blood look out; good sooth, she is
The queen of curds and cream."

Winter's Tale.

HAPPY, happy Lilacsbush! Never can I forget the delight with which I roamed over its heights and glens, and how I rioted in the pleasure of feeling I was again a sort of master in those scenes which had been the haunts of my boyhood! It was in the spring of 1784 before I was folded to the arms of my mother; and this, too, after a separation of near two years. Kate laughed, and wept, and hugged me, just as she would have done five years earlier, though she was now a lovely young woman, turned of nineteen. As for Aunt Mary, she shook hands, gave me a kind kiss or two, and smiled on me affectionately, in her own quiet, gentle manner. The house was in a tumult, for Jaap returned with me, his wool well sprinkled with gray, and there were lots of little Satanstoes (for such was his family name, notwithstanding Mrs. Jaap called herself Miss Lilacsbush), children and grandchildren, to welcome him. To say the truth, the house was not decently tranquil for the first twenty-four hours.

At the end of that time I ordered my horse, to ride across the country to Satanstoe, in order to visit my widowed grandmother, who had resisted all attempts to persuade her to give up the cares of housekeeping, and to come and live at Lilacsbush. The general, for so everybody now called my father, did not accompany me, having been at Satanstoe a

day or two before ; but my sister did. As the roads had been much neglected in the war, we went in saddle, Kate being one of the most spirited horsewomen of my acquaintance. By this time, Jaap had got to be privileged, doing just such work as suited his fancy ; or, it might be better to say, was not of much use except in the desultory employments that had so long been his principal pursuits ; and he was sent off an hour or two before we started ourselves, to let Mrs. Littlepage, or his "ole, ole missus," as the fellow always called my grandmother, know whom she was to expect to dinner.

I have heard it said that there are portions of the world in which people get to be so sophisticated, that the nearest of kin cannot take such a liberty as this. The son will not presume to take a plate at the table of the father without observing the ceremony of asking, or of being asked ! Heaven be praised ! we have not yet reached this pass in America. What parent, or grandparent, to the remotest living generation, would receive a descendant with anything but a smile, or a welcome, let him come when and how he will ? If there be not room, or preparation, the deficiencies must be made up in welcomes ; or, when absolute impossibilities interpose, if they are not overcome by means of a quick invention, as most such "impossibilities" are, the truth is frankly told, and the pleasure is deferred to a more fortunate moment. It is not my intention to throw a vulgar and ignorant gibe into the face of an advanced civilization, as is too apt to be the propensity of ignorance and provincial habits ; for I well know that most of the usages of those highly improved conditions of society are founded in reason, and have their justification in a cultivated common-sense ; but, after all, mother-nature has her rights, and they are not to be invaded too boldly, without bringing with the acts themselves their merited punishments.

It was just nine, on a fine May morning, when Kate Littlepage and myself rode through the outer gate of Lilacsbush, and issued upon the old, well-known King's Bridge road. *King's* Bridge ! That name still remains, as do those of the counties of Kings and Queens, and Dutch-

ess, to say nothing of quantities of Princes this and that in other States; and I hope they always may remain, as so many landmarks in our history. These names are all that now remain among us of the monarchy; and yet have I heard my father say a hundred times, that when a young man his reverence for the British throne was second only to his reverence for the church. In how short a time has this feeling been changed throughout an entire nation; or, if not absolutely changed, for some still continue to reverence monarchy, how widely and irremediably has it been impaired! Such are the things of the world, perishable and temporary in their very natures; and they would do well to remember the truth, who have much at stake in such changes.

We stopped at the door of the inn at King's Bridge to say good morning to old Mrs. Light, the landlady who had now kept the house half a century, and who had known us, and our parents before us, from childhood. This loquacious housewife had her good and bad points, but habit had given her a sort of claim on our attentions, and I could not pass her door without drawing the rein, if it were only for a moment. This was no sooner done, than the landlady in person was on her threshold to greet us.

"Ay, I dreamt this, Mr. Mordaunt," the old woman exclaimed, the instant she saw me, "I dreamt this no later than last week! It is nonsense to deny it; dreams do often come true!"

"And what has been your dream this time, Mrs. Light?" I asked, well knowing it was to come, and the sooner we got it the better.

"I dreamt the general had come home last fall, and he *had* come home! Now the only idee I had to help out that dream was a report that he was to be home that day; but you know, Mr. Mordaunt, or Major Littlepage, they tell me I ought now to call you—but you know, Mr. Mordaunt, how often reports turn out to be nothing. I count a report as no great help to a dream. So, last week, I dreamed you would certainly be home this week; and here you are, sure enough!"

"And all without any lying report to help you, my good landlady?"

"Why, no great matter; a few flying rumors, perhaps, but as I never believe them when awake, it's onreasonable to suppose a body would believe 'em when asleep. Yes, Jaap stopped a minute to water his horse this morning, and I foresaw from that moment my dream would come to be true, though I never exchanged a word with the nigger."

"That is a little remarkable, Mrs. Light, as I supposed you always exchanged a few words with your guests."

"Not with the blacks, major; it's apt to make 'em sassy. Sassiness in a nigger is a thing I can't abide, and therefore I keep 'em all at a distance. Well, the times that I have seen, major, since you went off to the wars! and the changes we have had! Our clergymen don't pray any longer for the king and queen—no more than if there was n't sich people living."

"Not directly, perhaps, but as a part of the church of God, I trust. We all pray for Congress now."

"Well, I hope good will come out of it! I must say, major, that his majesty's officers spent more freely, and paid in better money, than the continental gentlemen. I've had 'em both here by rijjiments, and that's the character I *must* give 'em, in honesty."

"You will remember they were richer, and had more money than our people. It is easy for the rich to appear liberal."

"Yes, I know that, sir, and you ought, and do know it, too. The Littlepages are rich, and always have been, and they are liberal too. Lord bless your smiling, pretty faces! I knowed your family long afore you knowed it yourselves. I knowed old Captain Hugh Roger, your great-grand'ther, and the old general, your grand'ther, and now I know the young general, and you! Well, this will not be the last of you, I dares to say, and there 'll be light hearts and happy ones among the Bayards, I'll answer for it, now the wars are over, and young Major Littlepage has got back!"

This terminated the discourse; for by this time I had enough of it; and making my bow, Kate and I rode on. Still, I could not but be struck with the last speech of the old woman, and most of all with the manner in which it was uttered. The name of Bayard was well known among us, belonging to a family of which there were several branches spread through the Middle States, as far south as Delaware; but I did not happen to know a single individual of them all. What, then, could my return have to do with the smiles or frowns of any of the name of Bayard? It was natural enough, after ruminating a minute or two on the subject, that I should utter some of my ideas, on such a subject, to my companion.

"What could the old woman mean, Kate," I abruptly commenced, "by saying there would now be light hearts and happy ones among the Bayards?"

"Poor Mrs. Light is a great gossip, Mordaunt, and it may be questioned if she know her own meaning half the time. All the Bayards we know are the family at the Hickories; and with them, you have doubtless heard, my mother has long been intimate."

"I have heard nothing about it, child. All I know is, that there is a place called the Hickories, up the river a few miles, and that it belongs to some of the Bayards; but I never heard of any intimacy. On the contrary, I remember to have heard that there was a lawsuit once, between my grandfather Mordaunt and some old Bayard or other; and I thought we were a sort of hereditary strangers."

"That is quite forgotten, and my mother says it all arose from a mistake. We are decided friends now."

"I'm sure I am very glad to hear it; for, since it is peace, let us have peace; though old enemies are not apt to make very decided friends."

"But we never were—that is, my grandfather never was an enemy of anybody; and the whole matter was amicably settled just before he went to Europe, on his unfortunate visit to Sir Harry Bulstrode. No, no—my mother will tell you, Mordaunt, that the Littlepages and

the Bayards now regard each other as very decided friends."

Kate spoke with so much earnestness that I was disposed to take a look at her. The face of the girl was flushed, and I fancy she had a secret consciousness of the fact; for she turned it from me as if gazing at some object in the opposite direction, thereby preventing me from seeing much of it.

"I am very glad to learn all this," I answered, a little dryly. "As I am a Littlepage, it would have been awkward not to have known it, had I accidentally met with one of these Bayards. Does the peace include all of the name, or only those of the Hickories?"

Kate laughed; then she was pleased to tell me that I was to consider myself the friend of all of the name.

"And most especially of those of the name who dwell at the Hickories? How many may there be of this especially peaceful breed? six, a dozen, or twenty?"

"Only four; so your task will make no very heavy demand on your affections. Your heart has room, I trust, for four more friends?"

"For a thousand, if I can find them, my dear. I can accept as many friends as you please, but have places for none else. All the other niches are occupied."

"Occupied!—I hope that is not true, Mordaunt. One place, at least, is vacant."

"True; I had forgotten a place must be reserved for the brother you will one day give me. Well, name him, as soon as you please; I shall be ready to love him, child."

"I may never make so heavy a draft on your affections. Anneke has given you a brother already, and a very excellent one he is; and that ought to satisfy a reasonable man."

"Ay, so all you young women say between fifteen and twenty, but you usually change your mind in the end. The sooner you tell me who the youth is, therefore, the sooner I shall begin to like him—is he one of these Bayards?—*un chevalier sans peur et sans reproche?*"

Kate had a brilliant complexion, in common; but, as I now turned my eyes toward her inquiringly, more in mischief, however, than with the expectation of learning anything new, I saw the roses of her cheeks expand until they covered her temples. The little beaver she wore, and which became her amazingly, did not suffice to conceal these blushes, and I now really began to suspect I had hit on a vein that was sensitive. But my sister was a girl of spirit, and though it was no difficult thing to make her change color, it was by no means easy to look her down.

"I trust your new brother, Mordaunt, should there ever be such a person, will be a respectable man, if not absolutely without reproach," she answered. "But if there be a Tom Bayard, there is also a Pris. Bayard, his sister."

"So—so—this is all news to me, indeed! As to Mr. Thomas Bayard, I shall ask no questions, my interest in him, if there is to be any, being altogether *ex officio*, as one may say, and coming as a matter of course; but you will excuse me if I am a little curious on the subject of Miss Priscilla Bayard, a lady, you will remember, I never saw."

My eye was on Kate the whole time, and I fancied she looked gratified, though she still looked confused.

"Ask what you will, brother—Priscilla Bayard can bear a very close examination."

"In the first place, then, did that old gossip allude to Miss Priscilla, by saying there would be light hearts and happy ones among the Bayards?"

"Nay, I cannot answer for poor Mrs. Light's conceits. Put your questions in some other form."

"Is there much intimacy between the people of the 'Bush and those of the Hickories?"

"Great—we like them exceedingly; and I think they like us."

"Does this intimacy extend to the young folk, or is it confined to the old?"

"That is somewhat personal," said Kate, laughing, "as I happen to be the only 'young folk' at the 'Bush, to maintain the said intimacy. As there is nothing to be ashamed of, however, but, on the contrary, much of which one may

267820

be proud, I shall answer that it includes 'all ages and both sexes;' everybody but yourself, in a word."

"And you like old Mr. Bayard?"

"Amazingly."

"And old Mrs. Bayard?"

"She is a very agreeable person, and an excellent wife and mother."

"And you love Pris. Bayard?"

"As the apple of mine eye," the girl answered with emphasis.

"And you like Tom Bayard, her brother?"

"As much as is decent and proper for one young woman to like the brother of another young woman, whom she admits that she loves as the apple of her eye."

Although it was not easy, at least not easy for me, to cause Kate Littlepage to hold her tongue, it was not easy for her to cause the tell-tale blood always to remain stationary. She was surprisingly beautiful in her blushes, and as much like what I had often fancied my dear mother might have been in her best days as possible, at the very moment she was making these replies as steadily as if they gave her no trouble.

"How is all this, then, connected with rejoicings among the people of the Hickories, at my return? Are you the betrothed of Tom Bayard, and have you been waiting for my return to give him your hand?"

"I am not the betrothed of Tom Bayard, and have not been waiting for your return to give him my hand," answered Kate, steadily. "As for Mrs. Light's gossipings, you cannot expect me to explain them. She gets her reports from servants, and others of that class, and you know what such reports are usually worth. But as for my waiting for your return, brother, in order to announce such an event, you little know how much I love you, if you suppose I would do any such thing."

Kate said this with feeling, and I thanked her with my eyes, but could not have spoken, and did not speak, until we had ridden some distance. After this pause, I renewed the discourse with some of its original spirit.

"On that subject, Katrinke, dear," I said, "I trust we understand each other. Single, or married, you will ever be very dear to me; and I own I should be hurt to be one of the last to learn your engagement, whenever that may happen. And now, for this Priscilla Bayard—do you expect me to like her?"

"Do I! It would be one of the happiest moments of my life, Mordaunt, when I could hear you acknowledge that you love her!"

This was uttered with great animation, and in a way to show that my sister was very much in earnest. I felt some surprise when I put this feeling in connection with the landlady's remarks, and began to suspect there might be something behind the curtain worthy of my knowledge. In order to make discoveries, however, it was necessary to pursue the discourse.

"Of what age is Miss Bayard?" I demanded.

"She is two months my senior; very suitable, is it not?"

"I do not object to the difference, which will do very well. Is she accomplished?"

"Not very. You know few of us girls who have been educated during the Revolution can boast of much in that way; though Priscilla is better than common."

"Than of her class, you mean, of course?"

"Certainly; better than most young ladies of our best families."

"Is she amiable?"

"As Anneke, herself!"

This was saying a great deal, our eldest sister, as often happens in families, being its paragon in the way of all the virtues, and Anneke's temper being really serenity itself.

"You give her a high character, and one few girls could sustain. Is she sensible and well-informed?"

"Enough so as often to make me feel ashamed of myself. She has an excellent mother, Mordaunt; and I have heard you say, often, that the mother would have great influence with you in choosing a wife."

"That must have been when I was very young, child, and before I went to the army, where we look more at the

young than at the old women. But, why a wife? Is it all settled between the old people, that I am to propose to this Priscilla Bayard, and you are a party to the scheme?"

Kate laughed with all her heart, but I fancied she looked conscious.

"You make no answer, young lady, and you must permit me to remind you that there is an express compact between you and me to treat each other frankly on all occasions. This is one on which I especially desire to see the conditions of the treaty rigidly enforced. Does any such project exist?"

"Not as a project, discussed and planned; no—certainly not. No, a thousand times, no. But I shall run the risk of frustrating one of my most cherished hopes, by saying, honestly, that you could not gratify my dear mother, Aunt Mary, and myself, more than by falling in love with Pris. Bayard. We all love her ourselves, and we wish you to be of the party, knowing that your love would probably lead to a connection we should all like more than I can express. There; you cannot complain of a want of frankness, for I have heard it said, again and again, that the wishes of friends, indiscreetly expressed, are very apt to set young men against the very person it is desired to make them admire."

"Quite likely to be true as a rule, though in my case no effect, good or bad, will be produced. But how do the Bayards feel in this matter?"

"How should I know! Of course, no allusion has ever been made to any of the family on the subject; and, as none of them know you, it is im—that is, no allusion—I mean—certainly not to more than one of them. I believe some vague remarks may have been ventured to one—but—"

"By yourself, and to your friend, Pris.?"

"*Never!*" said Kate, with emphasis. "Such a subject could never be mentioned between us."

"Then it must have been between the old ladies—the two mothers probably?"

"I should think not. Mrs. Bayard is a woman of reserve, and mamma has an extreme sense of propriety, as you yourself know, that would not be likely to permit such a thing."

"Would the general think of contracting me, when my back was turned!"

"Not he; papa troubles himself very little about such things. Ever since his return home, he has been courting mamma over again, he tells us."

"Surely, Aunt Mary has not found words for such an allusion!"

"She, indeed! Poor, dear Aunt Mary; it is little she meddles with any one's concerns but her own. Do you know, Mordaunt, that mamma has told me the whole of her story lately, and the reason why she has refused so many excellent offers. I dare say, if you ask her, she will tell you."

"I know the whole story already, from the general, child. But, if this matter has been alluded to to one of the Bayards, and neither my father, mother, nor Aunt Mary has made the allusion on our side, and neither Mr. Bayard, his wife, nor daughter has been the party to whom the allusion has been made on the other, there remain only yourself and Tom to hold the discourse. I beg you to explain this point with your customary frankness."

Kate Littlepage's face was scarlet. She was fairly caught, though I distrusted the truth from the moment she so stammered and hesitated in correcting her first statement. I will own I enjoyed the girl's confusion, it made her appear so supremely lovely; and I was almost as proud of her, as I tenderly loved her. Dear, dear Kate; from her childhood I had my own amusement with her, though I do not remember anything like a harsh expression, or an unkind feeling, that has ever passed, or indeed existed, between us. A finer study than the face of my sister offered for the next minute was never presented to the eye of man; and I enjoyed it so much the more, from a strong conviction that, while so deeply confused, she was not un-

happy. Native ingenuousness, maiden modesty, her habit of frank dealing with me, and a wish to continue so to deal, were all struggling together in her fine countenance, forming altogether one of the most winning pictures of womanly feelings I had ever witnessed. At length the love of fair-dealing, and love of me, prevailed over a factitious shame; the color settled back to those cheeks whence it had appeared to flash, as it might be, remaining just enough heightened to be remarked, and Kate looked toward me in a way that denoted all the sisterly confidence and regard that she actually felt.

"I did not intend to be the one to communicate to you a fact, Mordaunt, in which I know you will feel a deep interest, for I had supposed my mother would save me the confusion of telling it to you; but, now, there is no choice between resorting to equivocations that I do not like, and using our old long-established frankness."

"The long and short of which, my dear sister, is to say that you are engaged to Mr. Bayard!"

"No; not as strong as that, brother. Mr. Bayard has offered, and my answer is deferred until you have met him. I would not engage myself, Mordaunt, until you approved of my choice."

"I feel the compliment, Katrinke, and will be certain to repay it, in kind. Depend on it, you shall know, in proper season, when it is my wish to marry, and shall be heard."

"There is a difference between the claims of an elder and an only brother, and of a mere girl, who ought to place much dependence on the advice of friends, in making her own selection."

"You will not be a 'mere girl' when that time comes, but a married woman yourself, and competent to give good counsel from your own experience. To return to Tom, however; he is the member of his family to whom the allusion was made?"

"He was, Mordaunt," answered Kate, in a low voice.

"And you were the person who made it?"

"Very true; we were talking of you, one day; and I expressed a strong hope that you would see Priscilla with

the eyes with which, I can assure you, all the rest of your family see her. That was all."

"And that was quite enough, child, to cause Tom Bayard to hang himself, if he were a lover of the true temper."

"Hang himself, brother! I am sure I do not understand why!"

"Oh! merely at the palpable discouragement such a wish would naturally convey to the brother of the young lady, since he must have seen you are willing to connect the two families by means other than giving him your own hand."

Kate laughed; but as she did not look much confused, or at all alarmed, I was induced to believe that more important encouragement than could be afforded by means of her wish of marrying me to her suitor's sister had been given Master Tom, and that my disapproval of the gentleman would cause her more concern than she chose to avow. We rode on, however, some little distance, without either's offering to renew the discourse. At length, as became my sex, I spoke.

"When am I to see this paragon young man, and paragon young woman, Kate, since see both I must?"

"Not paragon young man, brother; I am certain I have called him by no such name; Tom Bayard is a good fellow; but I do not know that he is by any means a paragon."

"He is a good-looking fellow in the bargain, I take it for granted?"

"Not so much so as you are yourself, if that will gratify your vanity."

"It ought to, coming from such a quarter; my question is still unanswered, notwithstanding."

"To own the truth to you, Mordaunt, I expect we shall find Tom Bayard and Pris. at Satanstoe, to dine with my grandmother. She wrote me word, a day or two since, that both are asked, and that she hoped both would accept."

"The old lady is then in the plot, and intends to marry me, will ye, nill ye? I had thought this visit altogether a scheme of my own."

Kate again laughed, and told me I might make my own observations on that point, and judge for myself. As for the visit, I had only accidentally favored a project of others. The conversation now changed, and for several miles we rode along, conversing of the scenes of the war, without adverting to the Bayards, or to marriages.

We were within half a mile of the gate of the Neck, and within a mile of the house, when we met Jaap returning to Lilacsbush, and carrying some fruit to my mother, after having discharged his commission of an *avant-courier*. From Kate's remark I had discovered we had been invited by letter to take this excursion, though the ceremony of sending the negro across with his message had been observed for reasons that were not very natural under the circumstances. I made no remark, however, determining to see and judge for myself.

As a matter of course, we drew our reins, and stopped to exchange a few words with the black.

"Well, Jaap, how did the Neck look, after so long an absence?" I inquired.

"It look, sah, no means as well as ole missus, who do look capital, for such a lady! Dey do won'ers with 'e Neck, sah, if you just believe all young nigger say. But what you t'ink, Massa Mordy, I hear at 'e tavern, where I jist stop, sah, to water ole Dick?"

"And to get a sup of cider for old Jaap"—hereupon the negro laughed heartily, though he had the impudence neither to own nor to deny the imputation, his weakness in favor of "wring-jaw" being a well-established failing; "well, what did you hear, while taking down the usual mug?"

"I on'y get half a mug, dis time, sah; ole, ole missus nebber forgettin' to give me jist as much as I want. Well, sah, while ole Dick drink, 'e new landlady, who come from Connetick, you know, sah, she say to me, 'Where you go, ole color' gentleum?' Dat war' civil, anyhow."

"To which you answered—"

"I answer her, sah, and say I go to Satanstoe, whar' I come from, long time 'go."

"Whereupon she made some observation or other; well, what was it? You keep Miss Littlepage waiting."

"Lor' bless her, sah—it my business to wait on Miss Katrinke, not her business to wait on me; why you speak so droll, now, Massa Mordy?"

"Never mind all that, Jaap; what did the new Connecticut lady say, when you told her you were going to Satanstoe, the place where you had come from, a long time ago?"

"What she say, Massa Mordy, sah!—she say great foolishness, and make me mad. 'What you call by dat awful name?' she say, making face like as if she see a spook. 'You must mean Dibbleton,' she say; 'dat 'e way all 'e people as is genteel call 'e Neck.' Did you ebber hear 'e like, sah?"

"Oh, yes; I heard the like of it as soon as I was born; the attempt to change the name of our old place having existed now, these thirty years. Why, some people call Hellgate, Hurlgate; after that, one may expect anything. Do you not know, Jaap, a Yankee is never satisfied, unless he is effecting changes? One half his time he is altering the pronunciation of his own names, and the other half he is altering ours. Let him call the place what he will, you and I will stick to Satanstoe."

"Dat we will, sah; gib 'e debbil his due, sah; dat an ole sayin'. I 'm sure anybody as has eyes can see where his toe hab turn up 'e sile, and shape it he own way—no dibble dere, sah."

Thus saying, Jaap rode on, my sister and myself doing the same, pursuing the discourse that had thus accidentally arisen among us.

"Is it not odd, brother, that strangers should have this itching to alter the name of my grandmother's place?" said Kate, after we had parted from the black. "It is a homely name, certainly; but it has been used, now, a good deal more than a century, and time, at least, should entitle it to be let alone."

"Ay, my dear; but you are not yet aware of the desires, and longings, and efforts, and ambition of a 'little

learning.' I have seen enough, in my short career, to know there is a spirit up among us, that calls itself by the pretending title of the 'spirit of improvement,' which is likely to overturn more important things than the name of our poor Neck. It is a spirit that assumes the respectable character of a love of liberty; and under that mask it gives play to malice, envy, covetousness, rapacity, and all the lowest passions of our nature. Among other things, it takes the provincial pretence of a mock-refinement, and flatters an elegance of thought that is easiest attained by those who have no perceptions of anything truly elevated, by substituting squeamishness and affectations for the simplicity of nature and a good tone of manners."

CHAPTER IV.

"*Beat.* Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.
Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.
Beat. I took no more pains for these thanks, than
You take pains to thank me; if it had been painful,
I would not have come."

Much Ado About Nothing.

IN the porch of the house at Satanstoe stood my dear grandmother and the notable Tom Bayard, to receive us. The first glance at the latter told me that he was a "proper man"; and by the second, I got the pleasing assurance that he had no eye, just then, but for Kate. This was pleasant to know, as I never could have been happy in consenting to yield that dear girl to any but a man who appreciated her worth, and fully admired her beauty. As to my dear "ole, ole" grandmother, who was not so very old either, being still under seventy, her reception of us was just what I had ever found it—warm, affectionate, and gentle. She called my father, the general, Corny, even when she spoke to him in a room full of company; though, for that matter, I have heard my mother, who was much more of a woman of the world, having lived a great deal in society, do the same thing, when she thought herself alone. I have read some priggish book or other, written no doubt by one who knew men only through pages like his own, decrying such familiarities; but I have generally found those the happiest families, and at the bottom, the best toned, where it was Jack, and Tom, and Bob, and Dick, and Bess, and Di. As for your Louisa Adelinas, and Robert Augustuses, and all such elaborate respect, I frankly declare I have a con-

tempt for it. Those are the sort of people who would call Satanstoe, Dibbleton; Hellgate, Hurlgate; and themselves accomplished. Thank Heaven, we had no such nonsense at Lilacsbush, or at the Neck. My father was Corny; my mother, Anneke; Katrinke, Kate; and I was Mordy, or Mord; or, when there was no hurry, Mordaunt.

Tom Bayard met my salutations frankly, and with a gentlemanlike ease, though there was a slight color on his cheek which said to me, "I mean to get your sister." Yet I liked the fellow's manner. There was no grasping of the hand, and coming forward to rush into an intimacy at the first moment we met; but he returned my bow graciously and gracefully, and his smile as he did so seemed to invite further and better acquaintance.

Now I have seen a man cross a whole room to shake hands at an introduction to an utter stranger, and maintain a countenance the whole time as sombre as if he were condoling with him on the loss of his wife. This habit of shaking hands dolefully is growing among us, and is imported from some of our sister States; for it is certainly not a New York custom, except among intimates; and it is a bad usage in my opinion, as it destroys one of the best means of graduating feelings, and is especially ungraceful at an introduction. But alas! there are so many such innovations, that one cannot pretend to predict where they are to stop. I never shook hands at an introduction, unless it were under my own roof, and when I wished to denote a decidedly hospitable feeling, until after I was forty. It was thought vulgar in my younger days, and I am not quite certain it is not thought so now.

In the little, old-fashioned drawing-room, as of late years my good grandmother had been persuaded to call what was once only the best parlor, we found Miss Priscilla Bayard, who, for some reason that was unexplained, did not come to the porch to meet her friend. She was in truth a charming girl, with fine dark eyes, glossy hair, a delicate and lady-like form, and a grace of manner that denoted perfect familiarity with the best company of the

land. Kate and Pris. embraced each other with a warmth and sincerity that spoke in favor of each, and with perfect nature. An affected American girl, by the way, is very uncommon; and nothing strikes me sooner, when I see my own countrywomen placed at the side of Europeans, than the difference in this respect; the one seems so natural, while the other is so artificial!

My own reception by Miss Bayard was gracious, though I fancied it was not entirely free from the consciousness of having on some idle occasion heard her own name intimately connected with mine. Perhaps Kate, in their confidential moments, may have said something to this effect; or I may have been mistaken.

My grandmother soon announced that the whole party was to pass the night at Satanstoe. As we were accustomed to such plans, neither Kate nor myself raised the least objection, while the Bayards submitted to orders which I soon discovered even they were not unused to, with perfect good-will and submission. Thus brought together, in the familiarity of a quiet and small party in a country house, we made great progress in intimacy; and by the time dinner was over, or by four o'clock, I felt like an old acquaintance with those who had so lately been strangers to me, even by name. As for Bayard and my sister, they were in the best of humors from the start, and I felt satisfied their affair was a settled thing in their own minds; but Miss Priscilla was a little under constraint for an hour or two, like a person who felt a slight embarrassment. This wore off, however, and long before we left the table she had become entirely herself; and a very charming self it was, I was forced to admit. I say forced; for spite of all I had said, and a certain amount of good sense, I hope, it was impossible to get rid of the distrust which accompanied the notion that I was expected to fall in love with the young lady. My poor grandmother contributed her share, too, to keep this feeling alive. The manner in which she looked from one to the other, and the satisfied smile that passed over her countenance whenever she observed Pris. and myself conversing freely, be-

trayed to me completely that she was in the secret, and had a hand in what I chose to regard as a sort of plot.

I had heard that my grandmother had set her heart on the marriage of my parents a year or two before matters came round, and that she always fancied she had been very instrumental in forming a connection that had been as happy as her own. The recollection, or the fancy, of this success most probably encouraged her to take a share in the present scheme; and I have always supposed that she got us all together on that occasion in order to help the great project along.

A walk on the Neck was proposed in the cool of the evening; for Satanstoe had many a pleasant path, pretty vista, and broad view. Away we went, then, the four of us, Kate leading the way, as the person most familiar with the "capabilities." We were soon on the shore of the Sound, and at a point where a firm, wide beach of sand had been left by the receding waters, rocks fringing the inner boundary toward the main. Here one could walk without confinement of any sort, there being room to go in pairs, or all abreast, as we might choose. Miss Bayard seeming a little coy, and manifesting a desire to keep near her friend, I abandoned the intention of walking at her side, but fell behind a little, and got into a discourse with her brother. Nor was I sorry to have this early opportunity of sounding the party who was likely soon to become so nearly connected with me. After a few minutes, the conversation turned on the late Revolution, and the manner in which it was likely to influence the future fortunes of the country. I knew that a portion of the family of my companion had adhered to the crown, losing their estates by the act of confiscation; but I also knew that a portion did not, and I was left to infer that Tom's branch belonged to the latter division of his name, inasmuch as his father was known to be very easy in his circumstances, if not absolutely rich. It was not long, however, before I ascertained that my new friend was a mild tory, and that he would have been better pleased had the rights we had sought, and which he was willing enough to admit had

been violated, been secured without a separation of the two countries. As the Littlepages had actually been in arms against the crown, three generations of them, too, at the same time, and the fact could be no secret, I was pleased with the candor with which Tom Bayard expressed his opinions on these points; for it spoke well of the truth and general sincerity of his character.

"Does it not strike you as a necessary consequence of the distance between the two countries," I remarked, in the course of the conversation, "that a separation must, sooner or later, have occurred? It is impossible that two countries should long have common rulers when they are divided by an ocean. Admitting that our separation has been a little premature, a circumstance I should deny in a particular discussion, it is an evil that every hour has a tendency to lessen."

"Separations in families are always painful, Major Littlepage; when accompanied by dissensions, doubly so."

"Quite true; yet they always happen. If not in this generation, in the next."

"I do think," said Tom Bayard, looking at me a little imploringly, "that we might have got along with our difficulties without casting aside our allegiance to the king."

"Ay, that has been the stumbling-block with thousands; and yet it is, in truth, the very weakest part of the transatlantic side of the question. Of what avail is allegiance to the king, if parliament uses its power in a way to make American interests subservient to those of England? A great deal may be said, that is reasonable, in favor of kingly power; that I am ready enough to allow; but very little that renders one people subject to another. This thing called loyalty blinds men to facts, and substitutes a fancied for a real power. The question has been, whether England, by means of a parliament in which we have no representative, is to make laws for us or not; and not whether George III. is to be our sovereign, or whether we are to establish the sovereignty of the people." [1]

[1] This short dialogue is given in the text, because it is found in Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage's manuscript, and not because the state of feel-

Bayard bowed, civilly enough, to my remark, and he changed the subject. Sufficient had been said, however, to satisfy me that there would be little political sympathy between us, let the family tie be drawn as close as it might. The girls joined us before we had got altogether into another vein of discourse, and I was a little chagrined at finding that Kate entered rather more into her admirer's views of such subjects than comported with the true feelings, as I fancied, of a Littlepage, after all that had passed. Still, as I should have liked the woman I loved to agree with me in opinion as much as possible in everything, I was not disposed to judge harshly of my sister on that account. On the other hand, to my surprise, I found Miss Priscilla a zealous, and, to say the truth, a somewhat blind patriot; condemning England, the king, and the efforts of parliament with a warmth that was only equal to that with which she defended every thing, act, measure, principle, or policy, that was purely American.

I cannot say I had as much tolerance for the patriotism

ing in this country to-day has any connection with the opinions expressed. The American nation, as a whole, is now as completely emancipated from English political influence, as if the latter never had an existence. The emancipation is too complete, indeed, the effect having brought with it a reaction that is, on many points, running into error in a contrary direction; the third of our manuscripts having something to do with these excesses of opinion. But Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage appears to have some near glimmerings of the principles which lay at the root of the American Revolution, though the principle itself does not appear to have been openly recognized anywhere at the time. The king of England was originally king of America, as he was king of Ireland, and king of Scotland. It is true, there was no American flag, the system excluding the colonies from any power on the ocean; then each colony existed as independent of the others, except through their common allegiance. The revolution of 1688 slowly brought parliament into the ascendant; and by the time George III. ascended the throne, that ascendency had got to be almost undisputed. Now, America had no proper connection with parliament, which, in that day, represented England and Wales only; and this was a state of things which made one country dependent on the other, a subserviency of interests that clearly could last only so long as the party governed was too weak to take care of itself.

of Miss Bayard as I had for the petit treason of my sister. It seemed natural enough that Kate should begin to look at things of this nature with the eyes of the man she had made up her mind to marry; but it looked far more like management in her friend, who belonged to a tory family, to volunteer so freely the sentiments of one she could not yet love, inasmuch as until that day she had never even seen him.

"Is it not so, Major Littlepage?" cried this lovely creature, for very lovely she was, beyond all dispute; and feminine and delicate and lady-like, and all I could have wished her, had she only been a little less of a whig, and a good deal more of a tory; her eyes sparkling and flashing, at the same time, as if she felt all she was saying from the very bottom of her heart—"is it not so, Major Littlepage? America has come out of this war with imperishable glory; and her history, a thousand years hence, will be the wonder and admiration of all who read it!"

"That will somewhat depend on what her history may prove to be, between that day and this. The early history of all great nations fills us with admiration and interest, while mightier deeds effected by an insignificant people are usually forgotten."

"Still, this Revolution has been one of which any nation might have been proud!"

As it would not have been proper to deny this, I bowed and strayed a little from the rest of the party, under the pretence of looking for shells. My sister soon joined me, when the following short conversation passed between us.

"You find Pris. Bayard a stanch whig, Major Littlepage," commenced my warm-hearted sister.

"Very much so; but I had supposed the Bayards excessively neutral, if not absolutely the other way."

"Oh! that is true enough of most of them, but not with Pris., who has long been a decided whig. There is Tom, now, rather moderate in his opinions, while the father and mother are what you call excessively neutral; but Pris. has been a whig almost as long as I have known her."

"Almost as long! She was, then, a tory once?"

"Hardly; though certainly her opinions have undergone a very gradual change. We are both young, you will remember; and girls at their first coming out do very little of their own thinking. For the last three years, certainly, or since she was seventeen, Pris. has been getting to be more and more of a whig, and less and less of a tory. Do you not find her decidedly handsome, Mordaunt?"

"Very decidedly so, and very winning in all that belongs to her sex—gentle, feminine, lady-like, lovely, and withal a whig."

"I knew you would admire her!" cried Kate, in triumph. "I shall live to see my dearest wish accomplished!"

"I make no doubt you will, child; though it will not be by the marriage of a Mr. Littlepage to a Miss Bayard."

I got a laugh and a blush for this sally, but no sign of submission. On the contrary, the positive girl shook her head, until her rich curls were all in motion, and she laughed none the less. We immediately joined our companions, and by one of those crossings over and figurings in, that are so familiar to the young of the two sexes, we were soon walking along the sands again, Tom at Kate's side, and I at that of Priscilla Bayard. What the other two talked about I never knew, though I fancy one might guess; but the young lady with me pursued the subject of the Revolution.

"You have probably been a little surprised, Major Littlepage," she commenced, "to hear me express myself so warmly in favor of this country, as some of the branches of my family have been treated harshly by the new government?"

"You allude to the confiscations? I never justified them, and wish they had not been made; for they fall heaviest on those who were quite inoffensive, while most of our active enemies have escaped. Still it is no more than is usual in civil wars, and what would surely have befallen us, had it been our fortune to be the losing party."

"So I have been told; but, as no loss has fallen on any who are very near to me, my public virtue has been able to resist private feeling. My brother, as you may have seen, is less of an American than I am myself."

"I have supposed he is one of the 'extremely neutral'; and they, I have thought, always incline a little in favor of the losing party."

"I hope, however, his political bias, which is very honest, though very much in error, will not materially affect him in your good opinion. Too much depends on that, for me not to be anxious on the subject; and being the only decided whig in the family, I have thought I would venture to speak in behalf of a very dearly beloved brother."

"Well," I said to myself, "this is being sufficiently managing; but I am not quite so unpractised as to be the dupe of an artifice so little concealed! The deuce is in the girl, yet she seems in earnest, looks at me with the good faith and simplicity of a sister who feels even more than she expresses, and is certainly one of the loveliest creatures I ever laid eyes on! I must not let her see how much I am on my guard, but must meet management with management. It will be singular, indeed, if I, who have commanded a company of continentals with some credit, cannot get along with a girl of twenty, though she were even handsomer, and looked still more innocent than this Pris. Bayard, which would be no easy matter, by the way."

The reader will understand this was what I said to myself, and it was soon uttered, for one talks surprisingly fast to himself; but that which I said to my fair companion, after a moment's hesitation, was very different in language and import.

"I do not understand in what way Mr. Bayard can be affected by my opinion, let it be for or against him," I answered, with just as much innocency of expression, according to my notion of the matter, as the young lady herself had thrown into her own pretty countenance, thereby doing myself infinite credit, in my own conceit; "though I am far from judging any man severely because he happens to differ from me in his judgment of public things. The question was one of great delicacy, and the most honest men have differed the widest on its merits."

"You do not know how glad I am to hear you say this, Mr. Littlepage," returned my companion, with one of the

sweetest smiles woman ever bestowed on man. "It will make Tom completely happy, for I know he has been sadly afraid of you, on this very point."

I did not answer instantly; for I believe I was watching the traces of that bewitching smile, and speculating against its influence with the pertinacity of a man who was determined not to be taken in. That smile haunted me for a week, and it was a long time before I fully comprehended it. I decided, however, to come to the point at once, as respects Bayard and my sister, and not be beating the bush with indirect allusions.

"In what manner can my opinion influence your brother, Miss Bayard?" I asked, as soon as I was ready to say anything. "To prevent misconceptions, let me beg of you to be a little more explicit."

"You can hardly be ignorant of my meaning, I should think!" answered Priscilla, with a little surprise. "One has only to look at the couple before us, to comprehend how your opinion of the gentleman might have an influence on himself, at least."

"The same might be said of us, Miss Bayard, so far as my inexperienced eye can tell. They are a young couple, walking together; the gentleman appearing to admire the lady, I will confess; and we are a young couple walking together, the gentleman appearing to admire the lady, or he does no credit to his taste or sensibility."

"There," said I to myself again, "that is giving her quite as good as I receive; let me see how you take that."

Pris. took it very well; laughing and blushing just enough to make her appear the loveliest creature I had ever laid eyes on. She shook her head very much as my sister had done not long before, and disclaimed the analogy, first in her manner, and next with her tongue.

"The cases are very different, sir," she answered. "We are strangers to each other, while Tom Bayard and Kate Littlepage are acquaintances of years' standing. We do not love each other in the least; not a bit, though we are inclined to think very well of each other, on account of the interest we take in the couple before us, and because I

am the intimate friend of your only sister, and because you are the only brother of my intimate friend. There, however," and she now spoke with emphasis, "our interest ceases, never to be increased beyond a friendly regard, that I trust will grow up out of our respective merits and respective discernment. It is very, very different with the couple before us;" here, again, the flexible girl spoke with extreme feeling; every tone and cadence of her voice denoting lively sensibility. "They have been long attached, not admirers of each other, as you call it, Major Littlepage, but attached; and your opinion of my brother, just at this moment, is of the last importance to him. I hope I have at last made myself understood?"

"Perfectly; and I intend to be just as explicit. In the first place I enter into a solemn protest against all that you have said about the 'other couple,' with the exception of the interest we each feel in the brother or sister. Next, I proclaim Kate Littlepage to be her own mistress, so far as her brother Mordaunt is concerned; and lastly, I announce that I see or know nothing in the character, connections, fortune, person, or position of her suitor, Thomas Bayard, of the Hickories, Esquire, that is in the least below her pretensions or merits. I hope that is sufficiently satisfactory?"

"Entirely so; and from the bottom of my heart I thank you for it. I will own I have had some little apprehensions on the subject of Tom's political opinions; but those removed, nothing else can remain to create the smallest uneasiness."

"How is it possible that any of you could consider my notions of so much importance, when Kate has a father, a mother, and a grandmother living, all of whom, as I understand things, approve of her choice?"

"Ah, Mr. Littlepage, you are not conscious of your importance in your own family, I see. I know it better than you appear to know it yourself. Father, mother, grandmother, and sister, all think and speak of Mordaunt alike. To hear the general converse of the war, you would suppose that he had commanded a company, and Captain Lit-

tlepage the regiment. Mrs. Littlepage defers to Mordaunt's taste, and Mordaunt's opinions, and Mordaunt's judgment, even in housekeeping and hemstitching. Kate is forever saying, 'my brother says this,' 'my brother writes that,' 'my brother does t' other'; and as for the old lady here at the ''Toe,' she would hardly think her peaches and cherries could ripen, unless Mordaunt Littlepage, the son of her son Corny Littlepage,—by no accident does she ever call him 'general,'—were on the face of the earth to create an eternal sunshine!"

Was there ever a girl like this! That speech was made too, in the quietest, most gentle, lady-like manner possible. That the young lady had spirit and humor enough was very apparent; and for a moment I doubted whether both were not accompanied by the most perfect simplicity of character, and the most perfect good faith. Subsequent remarks and occurrences, however, soon revived all my original distrusts.

"This is a vivid picture of family weaknesses, that you have so graphically drawn, Miss Bayard," I answered, "and I shall not easily forget it. What renders it the more lively and pointed, and the more likely to be relished by the world, is the fact that Mordaunt so little deserves the extreme partiality of the friends you have mentioned."

"The last feature forms no part of my picture, Major Littlepage, and I disown it. As for the world, it will never know anything about it. You and I are not the world, nor are we at all likely ever to be the world to each other; I wish you particularly to understand that, which is the reason I am so frank with you on so short an acquaintance. I tell you your opinion is of the last importance to Tom; as your sister would not marry him, did she believe you thought in the least ill of him."

"And she would, did I think well of him?"

"That is a question a lady must answer for herself. And now we will say no more on the subject; for my mind is easy since I find you entertain no political hostility to Tom."

"Men are much less apt to entertain such feelings, I fancy,

after they have fairly fought out a quarrel, than when they only talk over its heads. Besides, the winning party is commonly the least rancorous, and success will make us whigs forgiving. I give you my honor, no objection will be raised against your brother, by me, on account of his opinions of the Revolution. My dear mother herself has been half a tory the whole war; and Kate, I find, has imbibed all her charity."

A singular, and, as I thought, a painful smile, crossed the sweet face of Priscilla Bayard, as I made this remark; but she did not answer it. It seemed to me she was now desirous of quitting the subject entirely, and I immediately led the discourse to other things.

Kate and I remained at Satanstoe several days, and Tom Bayard was a daily visitor; the distance between the Neck and the Hickories being no great matter. I saw the young lady twice during the interval; once, by riding over to her father's residence with that express object; and once when she came across on horseback to see her friend. I confess I was never more at a loss to understand a character than I was that of this young woman. She was either profoundly managing, or as innocent and simple as a child. It was easy to see that her brother, my sister, my grandmother, and, as I fancied, the parents of the young lady herself, were anxious that I should be on as good terms as possible with Pris., as they all called her; though I could not fathom her own feelings on the subject. It would have been unnatural not to have loved to gaze on her exceeding beauty, or not to have admired her extremely graceful and feminine manner, which was precisely all that one could wish it to be in the way of ease and self-possession, without being in the least free or forward; and I did gaze on the one, and admire the other, at the very moment I was most disposed to distrust her sincerity, and to believe her nature the very perfection of art. There were times when I was disposed to fancy this Pris. Bayard as profound and skilful an actor as one of her sex, years, and condition in life could well become, without falling altogether; and there were moments, too, when she seemed to be instinct with all the sensitive and best qualities of her sex.

It is scarcely necessary to say I remained heart-whole, under such circumstances, notwithstanding the obvious wishes of my friends, and the young lady's great advantages! A man no more falls blindly in love when he distrusts anything amiss, than he sees anything amiss when he is blindly in love. It has often been a matter of surprise to me, how often and how completely the wisest of the earthly races conspire to deceive themselves. When suspicions are once excited, testimony is not needed; condemnation following much as a logical induction, though founded on nothing better than plausible distrusts; while, on the other hand, where confidence exists, testimony is only too apt to be disregarded. Women, in particular, are peculiarly apt to follow the bias of their affections, rather than of their reasons, in all cases connected with guilt. They are hard to be convinced of the unworthiness of those who belong to them through the affections, because the affections are usually stronger with them than their reasoning powers. How they cling to their priests, for instance, when the cooler heads and greater experience of men condemn, and that merely because their imaginations choose to adorn the offenders with the graces of that religion which they venerate, and on which they rely! He is a shrewd man who can draw the line between the real and the false in these matters; but he is truly a weak one who disregards evidence, when evidence is complete and clear. That we all have our sins and our failings is true, but there are certain marks of unworthiness which are infallible, and which ought never to be disregarded, since they denote the existence of the want of principle that taints a whole character.

CHAPTER V.

"He were an excellent man, that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other, too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling."

Much Ado About Nothing.

THE very day my sister and I left Satanstoe, there was an interesting interview between my grandmother and myself, that it may be well to relate. It took place in the cool of the morning, before breakfast, indeed, and previously to the appearance of any of the rest of the party; for Tom Bayard and his sister had again ridden across the country to pass the night, and see us off. My grandmother had requested me to meet her thus early, in a sort of little piazza, that modern improvements had annexed to one end of the old buildings, and in which we both appeared accordingly with the utmost punctuality. I saw by a certain sort of importance that my good grandmother wore in her countenance, that she had weighty matters on her mind, and took the chair she had set for me with some little curiosity to learn what was to follow. The chairs were placed side by side, or nearly so, but looking different ways, and so close together that, when seated, we were quite face to face. My grandmother had on her spectacles, and she gazed wistfully through them at me, parting the curls on my forehead, as had been her wont when I was a boy. I saw tears rolling out from behind the glasses, and felt apprehensive I might have said or done something to have wounded the spirit of that excellent and indulgent parent.

"For Heaven's sake, grandmother, what can this mean?" I cried. "Have I done anything amiss?"

"No, my child, no; but much to the contrary. You are, and ever have been, a good and dutiful son, not only to your real parents, but to me. But your name ought to have been Hugh—that I will maintain, long as I live. I told your father as much when you were born; but he was Mordaunt mad then, as, indeed, he has remained pretty much ever since. Not that Mordaunt is not a good name, and a respectable name, and they say it is a noble name in England; but it is a family name, and family names are not fit for Christian names, at the best. Hugh would have been your name, if I could have had my way; and, if not Hugh, Corny. Well, it is too late for that now, as Mordaunt you are, and Mordaunt you must live and die. Did any one ever tell you, my child, how very, very like you are to your honored grandfather?"

"My mother, frequently; I have seen the tears start into her eyes as she gazed at me, and she has often told me my family name ought to have been Mordaunt, so much do I resemble her father."

"Her father! Well, Anneke does get some of the strangest conceits into her head! A better woman, or a dearer, does not breathe—I love your mother, my child, quite as much as if she had been born my own daughter; but I must say she does get some of the strangest notions into her head that mortal ever imagined. You like Herman Mordaunt! You are the very image of your grandfather Littlepage, and no more like Herman Mordaunt than you are like the king!"

The Revolution was then, and is now, still too recent to prevent these constant allusions to royalty, notwithstanding my grandfather had been as warm a whig as there was in the colonies, from the commencement of the struggle. As for the resemblance spoken of, I have always understood I was a mingled repetition of the two families, as so often happens, a circumstance that enables my different relatives to trace such resemblances as best suit their respective fancies. This was quite convenient, and may have been a reason, in addition to the fact of my being an only son,

that I was so great a favorite with the females of my family. My dear old grandmother, who was then in her sixty-ninth year, was so persuaded of my likeness to her late husband, the "old general," as he was now called, that she would not proceed in her communications until she had wiped her eyes, and gratified her affections with another long and wistful gaze.

"Oh, those eyes!" she murmured; "and that forehead! The mouth, too, and the nose, to say nothing of the smile, which is as much alike as one pea is like another!"

This left very little for the Mordaunts, it must be owned; the chin and ears being pretty much all that were not claimed for the direct line. It is true my eyes were blue, and the "old general's" had been as black as coals; my nose was Grecian, and his a most obtrusive Roman; and as for the mouth, I can only say mine was as like that of my mother's as a man's could well be like a woman's. The last I had heard my father say a thousand times. But no matter; age, and affection, and the longings of the parent, caused my grandmother to see things differently.

"Well, Mordaunt," the good old lady at length continued, "how do you like this choice of your sister Kate? Mr. Bayard is a charming young man, is he not?"

"Is it then a choice, grandmother? Has Kate actually made up her mind?"

"Pshaw!" answered my grandmother, smiling as archly as if she were sixteen herself; "that was done long ago—and papa approved, and mamma was anxious, and I consented, and sister Anneke was delighted, and everything was as smooth as the beach at the end of the Neck, but waiting for your approbation. 'It would not be right, grandmother, for me to engage myself while Mordaunt is away, and without his even knowing the gentleman; so I will not answer until I get his approbation too,' said Kate. That was very pretty of her, was it not, my child? All your father's children have a sense of propriety!"

"Indeed it was, and I shall not forget it soon. But suppose I had disapproved; what would have followed, grandmother?"

"You should never ask unpleasant questions, saucy fellow; though I dare to say Kate would at least have asked Mr. Bayard to wait until you had changed your mind. Giving him up altogether would be out of the question, and unreasonable; but she might have waited a few months or so, until you changed your mind; and I would have advised her so to do. But all that is unnecessary as matters are; for you have expressed your approbation, and Kate is perfectly happy. The last letter from Lilacsbush, which Jaap brought, gives the formal consent of your dear parents —and what parents you have, my child!—so Kate wrote an acceptance yesterday, and it was as prettily expressed a note as I have seen in many a day. Your own mother could not have done better in her young days; and Anneke Mordaunt worded a note as genteelly as any young woman I ever knew."

"I am glad everything has gone right, and am sure no one can wish the young couple more happiness than I do myself. Kate is a dear, good girl, and I love her as much as a brother can love a sister."

"Is she not? and as thorough a Littlepage as ever was born! I do hope she will be happy. All the marriages in our family have proved so hitherto, and it would be strange if this should turn out differently. Well, now, Mordaunt, when Kate is married, you will be the only one left."

"That is true, grandmother; and you must be glad to find there will be one of us left to come and see you, without bringing nurses and children at his heels."

"I! I glad of anything of the sort! No, indeed, my child; I should be sorry enough did I think for a moment you would not marry as soon as is prudent, now that the war is over. As for the children, I dote on them; and I have ever thought it a misfortune that the Littlepages have had so few, especially sons. Your grandfather, my general, was an only son; your father was an only son; and you are an only son; that is, so far as coming to men's estates are, or were concerned. No, Mordaunt, my child, it is the warmest wish of my heart to see you properly

married, and to hold the Littlepages of the next generation in my arms. Two of you I have had there already, and I shall have lived the life of the blessed to be able to hold the third."

"My dear, good grandmother!—what am I to understand by all this?"

"That I wish you to marry, my child, now that the war is ended; that your father wishes you to marry, that your mother wishes you to marry: and that your sister wishes you to marry."

"And all of you wish me to marry the same person? Is it not so?"

My grandmother smiled, but she fidgeted; fancying, as I suspected, that she had been pushing matters a little too fast. It was not easy, however, for one of her truth and simplicity of character to recede after having gone so far; and she wisely determined to have no reserves with me on the subject.

"I believe you are right, Mordaunt," she answered, after a short pause. "We do all wish you to fall in love as soon as you can; to propose as soon as you are in love; and to marry Priscilla Bayard, the instant she will consent to have you."

"This is honest, and like yourself, my dear grandmother; and now we both know what is intended, and can speak plainly. In the first place, do you not think one connection of this sort, between families, quite sufficient? If Kate marry the brother, may I be not excused for overlooking the attractions of the sister?"

"Priscilla Bayard is one of the loveliest girls in York Colony, Mordaunt Littlepage!"

"We call this part of the world York State, now, dearest grandmother. I am far from denying the truth of what you say; Priscilla Bayard is very lovely."

"I do not know what more you can wish, than to get such a girl."

"I shall not say that the time will not come when I may be glad to obtain the consent of the young lady to become my wife; but that time has not yet arrived. Then I ques-

tion the expediency, when friends greatly desire any particular match of saying too much about it."

My poor grandmother looked quite astounded, like one who felt she had innocently done mischief; and she sat gazing fondly at me, with the expression of a penitent child painted in her venerated countenance.

"Nevertheless, Mordaunt, I had a great share in bringing about the union between your own dear parents," she at length answered; "and that has been one of the happiest marriages I have ever known!"

I had often heard allusions of this nature, and I had several times observed the quiet smile of my mother, as she listened to them; smiles that seemed to contradict the opinion to which my grandmother's mistaken notions of her own influence had given birth. On one occasion (I was still quite a boy), I remember to have asked my mother how the fact was, when the answer was, "I married your father through the influence of a butcher's boy;" a reply that had some reference to a very early passage in the lives of my parents. But I well know that neither Cornelius Littlepage, nor Anneke Mordaunt, was a person to be coaxed into matrimony; and I resolved on the spot, their only son should manifest an equal independence. I might have answered my grandmother to this effect, and in language stronger than was my practice when addressing that reverend parent, had not the two girls appeared on the piazza at that moment, and broken up our private conference.

Sooth to say, Priscilla Bayard came forth upon me, that morning, with something like the radiance of the rising sun. Both the girls had that fresh, attractive look that is apt to belong to the toilets of early risers of their sex, and which probably renders them handsomer at that hour, than at any other part of the day. My own sister was a very charming girl, as any one would allow; but her friend was decidedly beautiful. I confess I found it a little difficult not to give in on the spot, and to whisper my anxious grandmother that I would pay proper attention to the young lady, and make an offer at the suitable time, as she ad-

vanced towards us, exchanging the morning salutations, with just enough of ease to render her perfectly graceful, and yet with a modesty and *retenue* that were infinitely winning.

"Mordaunt is about to quit me, for the whole summer, Miss Bayard," said my grandmother, who would be doing while there was a chance; "and I have had him out here, to converse a little together, before we part. Kate I shall see often during the pleasant season, I trust; but this is to be the last of Mordaunt until the cold weather return."

"Is Mr. Littlepage going to travel?" inquired the young lady, with just as much interest as good breeding demanded, and not a particle more; "for Lilacsbush is not so distant, but he might ride over once a week, at least, to inquire how you do."

"Oh, he is going a great, great distance, and to a part of the world I dread to think of!"

Miss Bayard now looked really startled, and a good deal astonished, questioning me with her very fine eyes, though she said nothing with her tongue.

"It is time I explain, lest Miss Bayard fancy my destination to be China; whither all American adventurers now seem bent on going. I shall not quit the State, however."

"As the State is of some size," answered Priscilla, "a grandmother may think an only grandson far enough distant who is at the other end of it. Perhaps you visit Niagara, Major Littlepage? I have heard of several gentlemen who have such an excursion in view; and glad enough shall I be when the roads are in such a state that ladies can be of the party."

"And you would have the spirit to be of such a party?" asked my grandmother, seizing with avidity everything, even to the least, that might encourage her wishes.

Pris. Bayard seemed fearful she had gone too far, for she blushed very charmingly, ere she answered.

"I am not aware, Mrs. Littlepage, that any very great spirit would be required," she said. "It is true, there are Indians by the way, and a vast wilderness between us and the end of the journey; but ladies have made it, I have

been told, and in safety. One hears such wonders of the Falls, that it would be a strong temptation to hazard something, in order to see them."

I look back with wonder over the short interval of time that interposes, when I remember how we used to regard the Falls of Niagara in my youth. A voyage to Europe seemed little less hazardous and serious; and voyages to Europe were not then what they are to-day.[1]

"Nothing would make me happier," I cried, gallantly, to my poor grandmother's ill-concealed delight, "than to be the protector of Miss Bayard on the excursion."

"You really think, then, of undertaking the journey, Major Littlepage?"

"Not this season, though I hold the hope in reserve, for some future day. My destination, at present, is Ravensnest, a place less than fifty miles distant from Albany."

"Ravensnest! That is a pretty name, though one might like it better, I think, Kate, were it Dovesnest, or Robinsnest, or Wrensnest. What is this Ravensnest, Mr. Littlepage!"

"An estate of a good deal of land, but of no great value as yet, whatever it may turn out to be hereafter, that was once the property of my grandfather Mordaunt, and which

[1] The reader of course will always recollect that this manuscript was written nearly, if not quite, forty years ago. Even then, a journey to Niagara was a serious undertaking. Now (1845), it can be made by steam the entire distance from the town of New York, or between 450 and 500 miles, in less than thirty-six hours! This is one of the prodigies of a giant in his infancy, and should render foreign politicians cautious how they talk of regulating the boundaries of this Republic for its citizens. If the past can be any pledge for the future in American history, they are now living who will see steam extended across the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the stars and stripes flying at each end! More than a thousand of the four thousand miles necessary to achieve such an object have been overcome: and that which remains to be done, comparing ends with means, is not one half as great an effort as that which has been done. This may be a proper place to add, that nothing has so much strengthened the present administration in its annexation projects, as the threatened interference of European governments in the affairs of this continent. At some critical moment, when it is least wanted, America may pay them in kind.—Editor.

he bequeathed to me. My father and Colonel Dirck have also an estate adjoining it, which is called Mooseridge. I am to visit both; as the owner of one, and as the agent of the owners of the other. It is time the several properties were looked to, the late troubles having almost thrown them out of our view."

"They tell me that a great deal is doing in the way of settling the wild lands of the interior this summer," continued Priscilla, with an interest in the subject that was much more obvious to me, than explicable; "and that a great many settlers are pouring in upon us from the adjoining New England States. I have heard, also, that the vast possessions of the Patroon are fast filling up, and that the heart of the State will soon be peopled."

"You are more conversant with such matters than it is usual to find young ladies, Miss Bayard. I ascribe this to your being so good a whig, which is but another name for a patriot."

Pris. blushed again, and she now seemed disposed to be silent; though I could still detect an interest in the subject, that to me was quite unaccountable. Kate probably saw this too, for she continued to converse about my journey, even after her friend had drawn a little on one side; and that, too, in a manner which seemed to say she was done.

"Who is the queer old man of whom I have heard you speak, Mordaunt," my sister demanded, "and with whom you have lately had some correspondence about these lands?"

"I suppose you mean my former comrade, the 'Chainbearer.' There was a captain in our regiment of the name of Coejemans, who bears this appellation, and who has contracted to get the necessary surveys made, though he fills the humble post of a chainbearer himself, not being competent to make the calculations."

"How can a mere chainbearer contract for a full survey?" asked Tom Bayard, who had joined the party, and had been listening to the discourse. "The chainbearers, in general, are but common laborers, and are perfectly irresponsible."

"That is true, as a rule; but my old friend forms an exception. He set out for a surveyor, but having no head for sines, and co-sines, and tangents, he was obliged to lower his pretensions to the humbler duty he now discharges. Still, he has long contracted for jobs of this nature, and gets as much as he can do, hiring surveyors himself, the owners of property having the utmost confidence in his measurements. Let me tell you, the man who carries chain is not the least important member of a surveying party in the woods. Old Andries is as honest as noonday, and everybody has faith in him."

"His true name is Coejemans, I think you said, Major Littlepage?" asked Priscilla, as it struck me, assuming an air of indifference.

"It is, Andries Coejemans; and his family is reputable, if not absolutely of a high caste. But the old man is so inveterate a woodsman, that nothing but patriotism, and his whig propensities, could have drawn him out into the open country. After serving most gallantly through the whole war, he has gone back to his chains; and many is the joke he has about remaining still in chains, after fighting so long and so often in the cause of liberty."

Priscilla appeared to hesitate—I thought her color increased a little—then she asked the question that was apparently uppermost in her thoughts, with surprising steadiness.

"Did you ever see the Chainbearer's niece, Dus Malbone?"

This question not a little surprised me; for, though I had never seen Ursula, the uncle had talked so much to me of his ward, that I almost fancied she was an intimate acquaintance. It often happens that we hear so much of certain persons, that we think and speak of them as of those we know; and had Miss Bayard questioned me of one of my late comrades in the service, I should not have been a whit more startled than I was at hearing her pronounce the familiar name of Dus Malbone.

"Where, in the name of all that is curious, did you ever hear of such a person!" I exclaimed, a little inconsiderately, since the world was certainly wide enough to admit

of two young women's being acquainted, without my consent; more especially as one of them I had never seen, and the other I had met, for the first time, only a fortnight before. "Old Andries was always speaking to me of his niece; but I could not suppose she was an acquaintance of one of your position in life!"

"Notwithstanding, we were something more than schoolfellows—for we were, and I trust are still, very, very good friends. I like Dus exceedingly, though she is quite as singular, in her way, as I have heard her uncle described to be, in his."

"This is odd! Will you allow me to ask one question? You will think it singular, perhaps, after what you have just told me—but curiosity will get the better of my manners: is Dus Malbone a lady—the equal and companion of such a person as Miss Priscilla Bayard?"

"That is a question not so easily answered, perhaps; since, in some respects, she is greatly the superior of any young woman I know. Her family, I have always heard, was very good on both sides; she is poor, poor even to poverty, I fear, now." Here Pris. paused; there was a tremor in her voice, even, and I detected tears starting to her eyes. "Poor Dus!" she continued; "she had much to support, in the way of poverty, even while at school; where she was, indeed, as a dependent, rather than as a boarder; but no one, among us all, could presume to offer her favors. I was afraid even to ask her to accept a ribbon, as I should not hesitate to do to Kate here, or any other young lady with whom I was intimate. I never knew a nobler-minded girl than Ursula Malbone, though few persons understand her, I think."

"This is old Andries over again! He was poor enough, Heaven knows; and I have know him actually suffer, in order to do his duty by this girl, and to make a proper appearance at the same time, as a captain in the New York line; yet none of us, not even my father, could ever induce him to borrow a single dollar. He would give, but he would not receive."

"I can believe this readily, it is so like Dus! If she has

her peculiarities, she has noble qualities enough to redeem a thousand foibles. Still, I would not have you to think Ursula Malbone is not an excellent creature in all respects, though she certainly has her peculiarities."

"Which, doubtless, she has inherited from the Coejemans, as her uncle, the Chainbearer, has his peculiarities too."

"The Malbones have none of the blood of the Coejemans," answered the lady, quickly; "though it is respectable, and not to be ashamed of. Dus Malbone's mother was only half-sister to Captain Coejemans, and they had different fathers."

I thought Pris. looked a little confused, and as if she were sorry she had said so much on the subject at all, the instant she had betrayed so much intimacy with the Malbone genealogy; for she shrunk back, plucked a rose, and walked away smelling the flower, like one who was indisposed to say any more on the subject. A summons to breakfast, however, would otherwise have interrupted us, and no more was said about the Chainbearer, and his marvellous niece, Dus Malbone. As soon as the meal was ended, our horses were brought round, and Kate and I took our leave, Jaap having preceded us as usual, an hour or more, with our luggage. The reader is not to suppose that we always moved in the saddle, in that day; on the contrary, my mother had a very neat chaise, in which she used to drive about the country, with a mounted postilion; my father had a phaeton, and in town we actually kept a chariot; for the union of the Mordaunt and Littlepage properties had made us very comfortable, and comfortably we lived. But young ladies liked the saddle twenty-five years ago, more than they do to-day; and Kate, being a capital horsewoman, like her mother before her, we were often out together. It was choice, then, and not necessity, a little aided by bad roads, perhaps, that induced us to ride across to Satanstoe so often, when we wished to visit our grandmother.

I kissed my dear old parent very affectionately at parting, for I was to see her no more that summer; and I got her blessing in return. As for Tom Bayard, a warm, brotherly shake of the hand sufficed, inasmuch as it was

pretty certain I should see him at Lilacsbush before I left home. Approaching his sister, who held out her hand to me in a friendly manner, I said as I took it,—

"I hope this is not the last time I am to see you, before I start for the new counties, Miss Bayard. You owe my sister a visit, I believe, and I shall trust to that debt for another opportunity of saying the unpleasant word 'farewell.'"

"This is not the way to win a lady's heart, Mordaunt," cried Kate, gayly. "It is only fifteen miles from your father's door to the Hickories, you ought to know, sir; and you have a standing invitation to darken its doors with your military form."

"From both my father and brother," put in Priscilla, a little hastily. "They will always be happy to see Major Littlepage, most certainly."

"And why not from yourself, Miss Prude," added Kate, who seemed bent on causing her friend some confusion. "We are not, now, such total strangers to each other, as to render that little grace improper."

"When I am mistress of a house of my own, should that day ever arrive, I shall take care not to lose my reputation for hospitality," answered Pris., determined not to be caught, "by neglecting to include all the Littlepage family in my invitations. Until then, Tom's and papa's welcomes must suffice."

The girl looked amazingly lovely all this time, and stood the smiles of those around her with a self-possession that showed me she knew perfectly well what she was about. I was never more at a loss how to understand a young woman, and it is very possible, had I remained near her for a month longer, the interest such uncertainty is apt to awaken might have sent me away desperately in love. But Providence had determined otherwise.

During our ride toward the 'Bush, my sister, with proper blushes and a becoming hesitation, let me into the secret of her having accepted Tom Bayard. They were not to be married until after my return from the north, an event that was expected to take place in the ensuing autumn.

"Then I am to lose you, Kate, almost as soon as I find you," I said, a little despondingly.

"Not lose me, brother; no, no, not lose me, but find me, more than ever. I am to be transplanted into a family whither you will soon be coming to seek a wife yourself."

"Were I to come, what reason have I for supposing it would be successful?"

"That is a question you have no right to ask. Did I even know of any particular reason for believing your reception would be favorable, you cannot believe me sufficiently treacherous to betray my friend. Young ladies are not of the facility of character you seem to suppose, sir; and no method but the direct one will succeed. I have no other reason for believing you would succeed, than the facts that you are an agreeable, good-looking youth, however, of unexceptionable family and fortune, living quite near the Hickories, and of a suitable age, temper, habits, character, etc., etc., etc. Are not these reasons sufficient to encourage you to persevere, my brave major?"

"Perseverance implies commencement, and I have not yet commenced. I scarcely know what to make of your friend, child; she is either the perfection of nature and simplicity, or the perfection of art."

"Art! Pris. Bayard artful! Mordaunt, you never did a human being greater injustice; a child cannot have greater truth and sincerity than Tom's sister."

"Ay, that's just it; Tom's sister is *ex officio* perfection; but you will please to remember that some children are very artful. All I can say on the subject at present is, that I like Tom, and I like his parents; but I do not know what to think of your friend."

Kate was a little offended, so she made me no answer. Her good-humor returned, however, before we had gone far, and the rest of our ride passed pleasantly enough, no allusions being made to any of the name of Bayard; though, I dare say, my companion thought a great deal of a certain Tom, of that name, as I certainly did of his handsome and inexplicable sister.

At the King's Bridge Inn, we had another short brush with that untiring gossip, its landlady.

"A pleasant time it has been over at the 'Toe, I dares to say," exclaimed Mrs. Light, the instant she thrust her head out of the door; "a most agreeable and amusing time both for the young gentleman and for the young lady. Mr. Thomas Bayard and Miss Pris. Bayard have been with you, days and days, and old Madam Littlepage is delighted. Oh! the 'Toe has always been a happy house, and happy faces have I long been used to see come out of it, and happy faces do I see to-day! Yes, yes; the 'Toe has always sent happy, contented faces down the road; and a happy roof it has been, by all accounts, these hundred years."

I dare say this was all true enough. I have always heard that the old place contained contented hearts; and contented hearts make happy faces. Kate's face was happiness itself, as she sat in the saddle listening to the crone; and my countenance is not one of ill-nature. The 'Toe was ever a happy house! It recalls old times, to hear a house thus familiarly spoken of; for a set is rising up among us which is vastly too genteel to admit that any one, man, woman, child, or Satan, ever had a member so homely as a 'Toe.

CHAPTER VI.

"They love their land, because it is their own,
And scorn to give aught other reason why;
Would shake hands with a king upon his throne,
And think it kindness to his majesty;
A stubborn race, fearing and flattering none,
Such are they nurtured, such they live and die;
All, but a few apostates, who are meddling
With merchandise, pounds, shillings, pence, and peddling."

HALLECK.

A DAY or two after my return to Lilacsbush, was presented one of those family scenes which are so common in the genial month of June, on the shores of the glorious old Hudson. I call the river the old Hudson, for it is quite as old as the Tiber, though the world has not talked of it as much, or as long. A thousand years hence, this stream will be known over the whole earth; and men will speak of it as they now speak of the Danube and the Rhine. As good wine may not be made on its banks as is made on the acclivities of the latter river; but, even to-day, better, both as to quality and variety, is actually drunk. On this last point, all intelligent travellers agree.

There stands a noble linden on the lawn of Lilacsbush, at no great distance from the house, and necessarily within a short distance of the water. The tree had been planted there by my grandmother Mordaunt's father, to whom the place once belonged; and it was admirably placed for the purposes of an afternoon's lounge. Beneath its shade we often took our dessert and wine, in the warm months; and thither, since their return from the army, General Littlepage and Colonel Dirck Follock used to carry their pipes,

and smoke over a campaign, or a bottle, as chance directed the discourse. For that matter, no battle-field had ever been so veiled in smoke, as would have been the case with the linden in question, could there have been a concentration of all the vapor it had seen.

The afternoon of the day just mentioned, the whole family were seated beneath the tree, scattered round, as shade and inclination tempted; though a small table, holding fruits and wine, showed that the usual business of the hour had not been neglected. The wines were madeira and claret, those common beverages in the country; and the fruits were strawberries, cherries, oranges, and figs; the last two imported, of course. It was a little too early for us to get pines from the islands, a fruit which is so common in its season as to be readily purchased in town at the rate of four of a good size for a dollar. But the abundance, and even luxury, of a better sort of the common American tables, is no news; viands, liquors, and fruits appearing on them, that are only known to the very rich and very luxurious in the countries of Europe. If the service were only as tasteful, and the cooking as good with us, as both are in France, for instance, America would be the very paradise of the epicure, let superficial travellers say what they please to the contrary. I have been abroad in these later times, and speak of what I know.

No one sat at the table, though my father, Colonel Dirck, and I were near enough to reach our glasses, at need. My mother was next to me, and reasonably close; for I do not smoke, while Aunt Mary and Kate had taken post just without the influence of the tobacco. On the shore was a large skiff, that contained a tolerably sized trunk or two, and a sort of clothes-bag. In the first were a portion of my clothes, while those of Jaap filled the bag. The negro himself was stretched on the grass, about half-way between the tree and the shore, with two or three of his grandchildren rolling about, at his feet. In the skiff was his son, seated in readiness to use his sculls, as soon as ordered.

All this arrangement denoted my approaching departure

for the north. The wind was at the south, and sloops of various degrees of promise and speed were appearing round the points, coming on, one in the wake of another, as each had been able to quit the wharves to profit by the breeze. In that day, the river had not a tenth part of the craft it now possesses; but still it had enough to make a little fleet, so near town, and at a moment when wind and tide both became favorable. At that time, most of the craft on the Hudson belonged up the river, and they partook largely of the taste of our Dutch ancestors. Notable travellers before the gales, they did very little with foul winds, generally requiring about a week to a fortnight to tide it down from Albany, with the wind at all from the south. Nevertheless, few persons thought of making the journey between the two largest towns of the State (York and Albany), without having recourse to one of these sloops. I was at that moment in waiting for the appearance of a certain "Eagle, of Albany, Captain Bogert," which was to run in close to Lilacsbush, and receive me on board, agreeably to an arrangement previously made in town. I was induced to take a passage in this vessel from the circumstance that she had a sort of after-cabin that was screened by an ample green curtain, an advantage that all the vessels which then plied on the river did not possess; though great improvements have been making ever since the period of which I am now writing.

Of course, the interval thus passed in waiting for the appearance of the Eagle was filled up, more or less, by discourse. Jaap, who was to accompany me in my journey to Ravensnest, knew every vessel on the river, as soon as he could see her, and we depended on him to let us know when I was to embark, though the movements of the sloop herself could not fail to give us timely notice of the necessity of taking leave.

"I should like exceedingly to pay a visit to old Mrs. Vander Heyden, at Kinderhook, Mordaunt," said my mother, after one of the frequent pauses that occurred in the discourse. "She is a relation, and I feel a great regard for her; so much the more, from the circumstance

of her being associated in my mind with that frightful night on the river, of which you have heard me speak."

As my mother ceased speaking, she glanced affectionately toward the general, who returned the look, as he returned all my mother's looks, with one filled with manly tenderness. A more united couple than my parents never existed. They seemed to me ordinarily to have but one mind between them; and when there did occur any slight difference of opinion, the question was not which should prevail, but which should yield. Of the two, my mother may have had the most native intellect, though the general was a fine, manly, sensible person, and was very universally respected.

"It might be well, Anneke," said my father, "if the major were to pay a visit to poor Guert's grave, and see if the stones are up, and that the place is kept as it should be. I have not been there since the year '68, when it looked as if a friendly eye might do some good at no distant day."

This was said in a low voice, purposely to prevent Aunt Mary from hearing it; and, as she was a little deaf, it is probable the intention was successful. Not so, however, Colonel Dirck, who drew the pipe from his mouth, and sat attentively listening, in the manner of one who felt great interest in the subject. Another pause succeeded.

"T'en t'ere ist my Lort Howe, Corny," observed the colonel; "how is it wit' his grave?"

"Oh! the colony took good care of that. They buried him in the main aisle of St. Peter's, I believe; and no doubt all is right with him. As for the other, major, it might be well to look at it."

"Great changes have taken place at Albany, since we were there as young people!" observed my mother, thoughtfully. "The Cuylers are much broken up by the Revolution, while the Schuylers have grown greater than ever. Poor aunt Schuyler, she is no longer living to welcome a son of ours!"

"Time will bring about such changes, my love; and we can only be thankful that so many of us remain, after so long and bloody a war."

I saw my mother's lips move, and I knew she was mur-

muring a thanksgiving to the power which had preserved her husband and son through the late struggle.

"You will write as often as opportunities occur, Mordaunt," said that dear parent, after a longer pause than usual. "Now there is peace, I can hope to get your letters with some little regularity."

"They tell me, cousin Anneke"—for so the colonel always called my mother when we were alone—"they tell me, cousin Anneke," said Colonel Dirck, "t'at t'ey actually mean to have a mail t'ree times a week between Alpany and York! T'ere ist no knowing, general, what t'is glorious Revolution will not do for us!"

"If it bring me letters three times a week from those I love," rejoined my mother, "I am sure my patriotism will be greatly increased. How will letters get out from Ravensnest to the older parts of the colony—I should say, State, Mordaunt?"

"I must trust to the settlers for that. Hundreds of Yankees, they tell me, are out looking for farms this summer. I may use some of them for messengers."

"Don't trust 'em too much, or too many," growled Colonel Dirck, who had the old Dutch grudge against our Eastern brethren. "See how they behav't to Schuyler."

"Yes," said my father, replenishing his pipe, "they might have manifested more justice and less prejudice to wise Philip; but prejudices will exist, all over the world. Even Washington has had his share."

"T'at is a great man!" exclaimed Colonel Dirck, with emphasis, and in the manner of one who felt certain of his point. "A ferry great man!"

"No one will dispute with you, colonel, on that subject; but have you no message to send to our old comrade, Andries Coejemans? He must have been at Mooseridge, with his party of surveyors, now, near a twelvemonth, and I'll warrant you has thoroughly looked up the old boundaries, so as to be ready for Mordaunt to start afresh, as soon as the boy reaches the patent."

"I hope he has not hiret a Yankee surveyor, Corny," put in the colonel, in some little alarm. "If one of t'em animals

get upon the tract, he will manage to carry off half of the lant in his compass-box ! I hope olt Andries knows petter."

"I dare say he'll manage to keep all the land, as well as to survey it. It is a thousand pities the captain has no head for figures; for his honesty would have made his fortune. But I have seen him tried, and know it will not do. He was a week once making up an account of some stores received from head-quarters, and the nearest he could get to the result was twenty-five per cent. out of the way."

"I would sooner trust Andries Coejemans to survey my property, figures or no figures," cried Colonel Dirck positively, "than any dominie in New England."

"Well, that is as one thinks," returned my father, tasting the madeira. "For my part, I shall be satisfied with the surveyor he may happen to select, even though he should be a Yankee. Andries is shrewd, if he be no calculator; and I dare to say he has engaged a suitable man. Having taken the job at a liberal price, he is too honest a fellow not to hire a proper person to do the head-work. As for all the rest, I would trust him as soon as I would trust any man in America."

"T'at is gospel. Mordaunt will haf an eye on matters too, seein' he has so great an interest in the estate. T'ere is one t'ing, major, you must not forget. Five hundred goot acres must be surveyed off for sister Anneke, and five hundred for pretty Kate, here. As soon as t'at is done, the general and I will give each of the gals a deet."

"Thank you, Dirck," said my father, with feeling. "I'll not refuse the land for the girls, who may be glad enough to own it some time or other."

"It's no great matter now, Corny; put, as you say, it may be of use one day. Suppose we make old Andries a present of a farm, in his pargain."

"With all my heart," cried my father, quickly. "A couple of hundred acres might make him comfortable for the rest of his days. I thank you for the hint, Dirck, and we will let Mordaunt choose the lot, and send us the description, that we may prepare the deed."

"You forget, general, that the Chainbearer has, or will

have, his military lot, as a captain," I ventured to remark. "Besides, land will be of little use to him, unless it might be to measure it. I doubt if the old man would not prefer going without his dinner, to hoeing a hill of potatoes."

"Andries had three slaves while he was with us; a man, a woman, and their daughter," returned my father. "He would not sell them, he said, on any consideration; and I have known him actually suffering for money when he was too proud to accept it from his friends, and too benevolent to part with family slaves, in order to raise it. 'They were born Coejemans,' he always said, 'as much as I was born one myself, and they shall die Coejemans.' He doubtless has these people with him, at the Ridge, where you will find them all encamped, near some spring, with garden-stuff and other small things growing around him, if he can find open land enough for such a purpose. He has permission to cut and till at pleasure."

"This is agreeable news to me, general," I answered, "since it promises a sort of home. If the Chainbearer has really these blacks with him, and has hutted judiciously, I dare say we shall have quite as comfortable a time as many of those we passed together in camp. Then, I shall carry my flute with me; for Miss Priscilla Bayard has given me reason to expect a very wonderful creature in Dus, the niece, of whom old Andries used to talk so much. You remember to have heard the Chainbearer speak of such a person, I dare say, sir; for he was quite fond of mentioning her."

"Perfectly well; Dus Malbone was a sort of toast among the young men of the regiment at one time, though no one of them all ever could get a sight of her, by hook or by crook."

Happening to turn my head at that moment, I found my dear mother's eyes turned curiously on me; brought there, I fancy, by the allusion to Tom's sister.

"What does Priscilla Bayard know of this Chainbearer's niece?" that beloved parent asked, as soon as she perceived that her look had attracted my attention.

"A great deal, it would seem; since she tells me they are fast friends; quite as great, I should judge from Miss Bayard's language and manner, as Kate and herself."

"That can scarcely be," returned my mother, slightly smiling, "since there the principal reason must be wanting. Then, this Dus can hardly be Priscilla Bayard's equal."

"One never knows such a thing, mother, until he has had an opportunity of making comparisons; though Miss Bayard herself says Dus is much her superior in many things. I am sure her uncle is my superior in some respects; in carrying chain, particularly so."

"Ay, but scarcely in station, Mordaunt."

"He was the senior captain of the regiment."

"True; but revolutions are revolutions. What I mean is, that your Chainbearer can hardly be a gentleman."

"That is a point not to be decided in a breath. He is, and he is not. Old Andries is of a respectable family, though but indifferently educated. Men vastly his inferiors in birth, in habits, in the general notions of the caste, in the New England States, are greatly his superiors in knowledge. Nevertheless, while we must all admit how necessary a certain amount of education has become, at the present time, to make a gentleman, I think every gentleman will allow hundreds among us have degrees in their pockets with small claims to belong to the class. Three or four centuries ago, I should have answered that old Andries was a gentleman, though he had to bite the wax with his teeth and make a cross, for want of a better signature."

"And he what you call a chainbearer, Mordaunt!" exclaimed my sister.

"As well as late senior captain in your father's regiment, Miss Littlepage. But no matter, Andries and Dus are such as they are, and I shall be glad to have them for companions this summer. Jaap is making signals, and I must quit you all. Heigho! It is very pleasant here, under this linden, and home begins to entwine its fibres around my heart. Never mind; it will soon be autumn, and I shall see the whole of you, I trust, as I leave you, well and happy in town."

My dear, dear mother had tears in her eyes, when she embraced me; so had Kate, who, though she did love Tom Bayard most, loved me very warmly too. Aunt Mary

kissed me, in her quiet but affectionate way; and I shook hands with the gentlemen, who accompanied me down to the boat. I could see that my father was affected. Had the war still continued, he would have thought nothing of the separation; but in that piping time of peace, it seemed to come unseasonably.

"Now don't forget the great lots for Anneke and Katrinke," said Colonel Dirck, as we descended to the shore. "Let Andries pick out some of the best of the lant, t'at is well watered and timbered, and we 'll call the lots after the gals; that is a goot idea, Corny."

"Excellent, my friend. Mordaunt, my son, if you come across any places that look like graves, I wish you would set up marks by which they may be known. It is true, a quarter of a century or more makes many changes in the woods; and it is quite likely no such remains will be found."

"A quarter of a century in the American forests, sir," I answered, "is somewhat like the same period in the wanderings of a comet; lost, in the numberless years of its growth. A single tree will sometimes outlast the generations of an entire nation."

"You wilt rememper, Mordaunt, that I wilt haf no Yankee tenants on my estate. Your father may lease 'em one half of a lot, if he please; but I will not lease t' other."

"As you are tenants in common, gentlemen," I answered, smiling, "it will not be easy to separate the interests in this manner. I believe I understand you, however; I am to sell the lands of Mooseridge, or covenant to sell, as your attorney, while I follow up my grandfather Mordaunt's ideas, and lease those that are not yet leased, on my own estate. This will at least give the settlers a choice, and those who do not like one plan of obtaining their farms may adopt the other."

I now shook hands again with the gentlemen, and stepping into the skiff, we pulled away from the shore. Jaap had made this movement in good season, and we were compelled to row a quarter of a mile down the river to meet the sloop. Although the wind was perfectly fair, it was not so fresh as to induce Mr. Bogert to round-to; but

throwing us a rope, it was caught, when we were safely transferred, bag and baggage, to the decks of the Eagle.

Captain Bogert was smoking at the helm, when he returned my salute. Removing the pipe, after a puff or two, he pointed with the stem toward the group on the shore, and inquired if I wished to say "good-by."

"Allponny"—so the Dutch were wont to pronounce the name of their town in the last century—"is a long way off," he said, "and maype you woult like to see the frients ag'in."

This business of waving hats and handkerchiefs is a regular thing on the Hudson, and I expressed my willingness to comply with the usage, as a matter of course.[1] In consequence, Mr. Bogert deliberately sheered in toward the shore, and I saw the whole family collecting on a low rock, near the water, to take the final look. In the background stood the Satanstoes, a dark, woolly group, including Mrs. Jaap, and two generations of descendants. The whites were weeping; that is to say, my dear mother and Kate; and the blacks were laughing, though the old lady kept her teeth to herself about as much as she exposed them. A sensation almost invariably produces laughter with a negro, the only exceptions being on occasions of singular gravity.

I believe, if the truth were known, Mr. Bogert greatly exulted in the stately movement of his sloop, as she brushed along the shore, at no great distance from the rocks, with

[1] Such were the notions of Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage, at the commencement of this century, and such his feeling shortly after the peace of 1783. Nothing of the sort more completely illustrates the general change that has come over the land, in habits and material things, than the difference between the movements of that day and those of our own. Then, the departure of a sloop, or the embarkation of a passenger along the shore, brought parties to the wharves, and wavings of handkerchiefs, as if those who were left behind felt a lingering wish to see the last of their friends. Now, literally thousands come and go daily, passing about as many hours on the Hudson as their grandfathers passed days; and the shaking of hands and leave-takings are usually done at home. It would be a bold woman who would think now of waving a handkerchief to a Hudson River steamboat!—EDITOR.

her main-boom guyed out to starboard, and studding-sail boom to port. The flying-topsail, too, was set; and the Eagle might be said to be moving in all her glory. She went so near the rocks, too, as if she despised danger! Those were not the days of close calculations that have succeeded. Then, an Albany skipper did not mind losing a hundred or two hundred feet of distance in making his run; whereas, now, it would not be an easy matter to persuade a Liverpool trader to turn as much aside in order to speak a stranger in the centre of the Atlantic; unless, indeed, he happened to want to get the other's longitude.

As the sloop swept past the rocks, I got bows, waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and good wishes enough to last the whole voyage. Even Jaap had his share; and "Good-by, Jaap," came to my ears, from even the sweet voice of Kate. Away we went, in stately Dutch movement, slow but sure. In ten minutes Lilacsbush was behind us, and I was once more alone in the world, for months to come.

There was now time to look about me, and to ascertain who were my companions in this voyage. The skipper and crew were as usual the masters; and the pilots, both whites, and both of Dutch extraction; an old wrinkled negro, who had passed his life on the Hudson, as a foremast-hand, and two younger blacks, one of whom was what was dignified with the name of cabin-steward. Then there were numerous passengers; some of whom appeared to belong to the upper classes. They were of both sexes, but all were strangers to me. On the main-deck were six or eight sturdy, decent, quiet, respectable-looking laborers, who were evidently of the class of husbandmen. Their packs were lying in a pile, near the foot of the mast, and I did not fail to observe that there were as many axes as there were packs.

The American axe! It has made more real and lasting conquests than the sword of any warlike people that ever lived; but they have been conquests that have left civilization in their train instead of havoc and desolation. More than a million of square miles of territory[1] have been opened up from the shades of the virgin forest, to admit the warmth

[1] More than two millions at the present day.

of the sun; and culture and abundance have been spread where the beast of the forest so lately roamed, hunted by the savage. Most of this, too, has been affected between the day when I went on board the Eagle, and that on which I am now writing. A brief quarter of a century has seen these wonderful changes wrought; and at the bottom of them all lies this beautiful, well-prized, ready, and efficient implement, the American axe!

It would not be easy to give the reader a clear notion of the manner in which the young men and men of all ages, of the older portions of the new republic, poured into the woods to commence the business of felling the forests, and laying bare the secrets of nature, as soon as the nation rose from beneath the pressure of war, to enjoy the freedom of peace. The history of that day in New York, which State led the van in the righteous strife of improvement, and has ever since so nobly maintained its vantage-ground, has not yet been written. When it is properly recorded, names will be rescued from oblivion that better deserve statues and niches in the temple of national glory, than those of many who have merely got the start of them by means of the greater facility with which the public mind is led away in the train of brilliant exploits, than it is made sensible of the merits of those that are humane and useful.

It was not usual for settlers, as it has become the practice to term those who first take up and establish themselves on new lands, to make their journeys from the neighborhood of the sea to the interior, other than by land; but a few passed out of Connecticut by the way of New York, and thence up the river in sloops. Of this character were those found on board the Eagle. In all, we had seven of these men, who got into discourse with me the first day of our passage, and I was a little surprised at discovering how much they already knew of me, and of my movements. Jaap, however, soon suggested himself to my mind, as the probable means of the intelligence they had gleaned; and on inquiry, such I ascertained was the fact.

The curiosity and the questioning propensities of the people of New England have been so generally admitted by

writers and commentators on American character, that I suppose one has a right to assume the truth of the characteristics. I have heard various ways of accounting for them; and among others, the circumstance of their disposition to emigrate, which brings with it the necessity of inquiring after the welfare of friends at a distance. It appears to me, however, this is taking a very narrow view of the cause, which I attribute to the general activity of mind among a people little restrained by the conventional usages of more sophisticated conditions of society. The practice of referring so much to the common mind, too, has a great influence on all the opinions of this peculiar portion of the American population, seeming to confer the right to inquire into matters that are elsewhere protected by the sacred feeling of individual privacy.

Let this be as it might, my axe-men had contrived to get out of Jaap all he knew about Ravensnest and Mooseridge, as well as my motives in making the present journey. This information obtained, they were not slow in introducing themselves to me, and of asking the questions that were uppermost in their minds. Of course, I made such answers as were called for by the case, and we established a sort of business acquaintance between us, the very first day. The voyage lasting several days, by the time we reached Albany, pretty much all that could be said on such a subject had been uttered by one side or the other.

As respected Ravensnest, my own property, my grandfather had requested in his will that the farms might be leased, having an eye to my children's profit, rather than to mine. His request was a law to me, and I had fully determined to offer the unoccupied land of that estate, or quite three fourths of the whole patent, on leases similar in their conditions to those which had already been granted. On the other hand, it was the intention to part with the lots of Mooseridge, in fee. These conditions were made known to the axe-men, as my first essay in settling a new country; and, contrary to what had been my expectation, I soon discovered that these adventurers inclined more to the leases than to the deeds. It is true, I expected a small payment

down, in the case of each absolute sale, while I was prepared to grant leases, for three lives, at very low rents at the best; and in the cases of a larger proportion of the lots, those that were the least eligible by situation, or through their quality, to grant them leases without any rent at all, for the first few years of their occupation. These last advantages, and the opportunity of possessing lands a goodly term of years, for rents that were put as low as a shilling an acre, were strong inducements, as I soon discovered, with those who carried all they were worth in their packs, and who thus reserved the little money they possessed to supply the wants of their future husbandry.

We talked these matters over during the week we were on board the sloop; and by the time we came in sight of the steeples of Albany, my men's minds were made up to follow me to the 'Nest. These steeples were then two in number, namely: that of the English church, that stood near the margin of the town, against the hill; and that of the Dutch church, which occupied an humbler site, on the low land, and could scarcely be seen rising above the pointed roofs of the adjacent houses; though these last, themselves, were neither particularly high nor particularly imposing.

CHAPTER VII.

"Who is that graceful female here
With yon red hunter of the deer?
Of gentle mien and shape, she seems
For civil halls designed;
Yet with the stately savage walks,
As she were of his kind."

PINCKNEY.

I MADE little stay in Albany, but, giving the direction to the patent to the axe-men, left it the very day of our arrival. There were very few public conveyances in that early day, and I was obliged to hire a wagon to transport Jaap and myself, with our effects, to Ravensnest. A sort of dull calm had come over the country, after the struggles of the late war; but one interest in it appearing to be alive and very active. That interest, fortunately for me, appeared to be the business of "land-hunting" and "settling." Of this I had sufficient proof in Albany itself; it being difficult to enter the principal street of that town, and not find in it more or less of these adventurers, the emblems of whose pursuit were the pack and the axe. Nine out of ten came from the Eastern or New England States, then the most peopled, while they were not very fortunate in either soil or climate.

We were two days in reaching Ravensnest, a property which I had owned for several years, but which I now saw for the first time. My grandfather had left a sort of agent on the spot, a person of the name of Jason Newcome, who was of my father the general's age, and who had once been a schoolmaster in the neighborhood of Satanstoe. This agent had leased extensively himself, and was said to be the

occupant of the only mills, of any moment, on the property. With him a correspondence had been maintained; and once or twice during the war my father had managed to have an interview with this representative of his and my interests. As for myself, I was now to see him for the first time. We knew each other by reputation only; and certain passages in the agency had induced me to give Mr. Newcome notice that it was my intention to make a change in the management of the property.

Any one who is familiar with the aspect of things in what is called a "new country," in America, must be well aware it is not very inviting. The lovers of the picturesque can have little satisfaction in looking even on the finest natural scenery at such moments; the labor that has been effected usually having done so much to mar the beauties of nature, without having yet had time to supply the deficiencies by those of art. Piles of charred or half-burned logs; fields covered with stumps, or ragged with stubs; fences of the rudest sorts, and filled with brambles; buildings of the meanest character; deserted clearings; and all the other signs of a state of things in which there is a manifest and constant struggle between immediate necessity and future expediency, are not calculated to satisfy either the hopes or the tastes. Occasionally a different state of things, however, under circumstances peculiarly favorable, does exist; and it may be well to allude to it, lest the reader form but a single picture of this transition state of American life. When the commerce of the country is active, and there is a demand for the products of new lands, a settlement often presents a scene of activity in which the elements of a thriving prosperity make themselves apparent amid the smoke of fallows, and the rudeness of border life. Neither, however, was the case at Ravensnest when I first visited the place; though the last was to a certain extent its condition two or three years later, or after the great European war brought its wheat and ashes into active demand.

I found but few more signs of cultivation, between the point where I left the great northern road and the bounds of the patent, than had been found by my father, as he had

described them to me in his first visit, which took place a quarter of a century earlier than this of mine. There was one log tavern, it is true, in the space mentioned; but it afforded nothing to drink but rum, and nothing to eat but salted pork and potatoes, the day I stopped there to dine. But there were times and seasons when, by means of venison, wild-fowl, and fish, a luxurious board might have been spread. That this was not the opinion of my landlady, nevertheless, was apparent from the remarks she made while I was at table.

"You are lucky, Major Littlepage," she said, "in not having come among us in one of what I call our 'starving times'—and awful times they be, if a body may say what she thinks on 'em."

"Starvation is a serious matter at any time," I answered, "though I did not know you were ever reduced to such difficulties in a country as rich and abundant as this."

"Of what use is riches and abundance if a man will do nothing but fish and shoot? I've seen the day when there was n't a mouthful to eat in this house, but a dozen or two of squabs, a string of brook trout, and maybe a deer, or a salmon from one of the lakes."

"A little bread would have been a welcome addition to such a meal."

"Oh! as for bread, I count that for nothin'. We always have bread and potatoes enough; but I hold a family to be in a desperate way, when the mother can see the bottom of the pork-barrel. Give me the children that 's raised on good sound pork, afore all the game in the country. Game 's good as a relish, and so 's bread; but pork is the staff of life! To have good pork, a body must have good corn; and good corn needs hoeing; and a hoe is n't a fish-pole, or a gun. No, my children I calkerlate to bring up on pork, with just as much bread and butter as they may want!"

This was American poverty as it existed in 1784. Bread, butter, and potatoes, *ad libitum*; but little pork, and no tea. Game in abundance in its season; but the poor man who lived on game was supposed to be keeping just

as poor an establishment as the epicure in town who gives a dinner to his brethren, and is compelled to apologize for there being no game in the market. Curious to learn more from this woman, I pursued the discourse.

"There are countries, I have read," I continued, "in which the poor do not taste meat of any sort, not even game, from the beginning of the year to its end; and sometimes not even bread."

"Well, I'm no great hand for bread, as I said afore, and should eat no great matter of it, so long as I could get pork," the woman answered, evidently interested in what I had said; "but I should n't like to be without it altogether; and the children, especially, do love to have it with their butter. Living on potatoes alone must be a wild animal sort of a life."

"Very tame animals do it, and that from dire necessity."

"Is there any law agin their using bread and meat?"

"No other law than the one which forbids their using that which is the property of another."

"Good land!"—this is a very common American expression among the women—"good land! Why don't they go to work and get in crops, so they might live a little?"

"Simply because they have no land to till. The land belongs to others, too."

"I should think they might hire, if they could n't buy. It 's about as good to hire as it is to buy—some folks" (folk) "think it 's better. Why don't they take land on shares, and live?"

"Because land itself is not to be had. With us, land is abundant; we have more of it than is necessary, or than will be necessary, for ages to come; perhaps it would be better for our civilization were there less of it: but in the countries of which I speak, there are more people than there is land."

"Well, land is a good thing, I admit, and it 's right there should be an owner to it; yet there are folks who would rather squat than buy or hire any day. Squatting comes nat'ral to 'em."

"Are there many squatters in this part of the country?"

The woman looked a little confused, and she did not answer me, until she had taken time to reflect on what she should say.

"Some folks call us squatters, I s'pose," was the reluctant answer, "but I do not. We have bought the betterments of a man who had n't much of a title, I think likely; but as we bought his betterments fairly, Mr. Tinkum"—that was the husband's name—"is of opinion that we live under title, as it is called. What do you say to it, Major Littlepage?"

"I can only say that naught will produce naught; nothing, nothing. If the man of whom you purchased owned nothing, he could sell nothing. The betterments he called his were not his; and in purchasing them, you purchased what he did not own."

"Well, it 's no great shakes, if he had n't any right, sin' Tinkum only gi'n an old saddle, that warn't worth two dollars, and part of a set of single harness, that I 'd defy a conjuror to make fit any mule, for the whull right. One year's rent of this house is worth all put together, and that twice over if the truth must be said; and we 've been in it, now, seven years. My four youngest were all born under this blessed roof, such as it is!"

"In that case, you will not have much reason to complain, when the real owner of the soil appears to claim it. The betterments came cheap, and they will go as cheap."

"That 's just it; though I don't call ourselves much of squatters, a'ter all, seein' we have paid suthin' for the betterments. They say an old nail, paid in due form, will make a sort of title in the highest court of the State. I 'm sure the laws should be considerate of the poor."

"Not more so than of the rich. The laws should be equal and just; and the poor are the last people who ought to wish them otherwise, since they are certain to be the losers when any other principle governs. Rely on it, my good woman, the man who is forever preaching the rights of the poor is at bottom a rogue, and means to make that cry a

stalking-horse for his own benefit; since nothing can serve the poor but severe justice. No class suffers so much by a departure from the rule, as the rich have a thousand other means of attaining their ends, when the way is left clear to them, by setting up any other master than the right."

"I don't know but it may be so; but I don't call ourselves squatters. There is dreadful squatters about here, though, and on your lands too, by the tell."

"On my lands? I am sorry to hear it, for I shall feel it a duty to get rid of them. I very well know that the great abundance of land that we have in the country, its little comparative value, and the distance at which the owners generally reside from their estates, have united to render the people careless of the rights of those who possess real property; and I am prepared to view things as they are among ourselves, rather than as they exist in older countries; but I shall not tolerate squatters."

"Well, by all I hear, I think you 'll call old Andries, the Chainbearer, a squatter of the first class. They tell me the old chap has come back from the army as fierce as a catamount, and that there is no speaking to him, as one used to could, in old times."

"You are then an old acquaintance of the Chainbearer?"

"I should think I was. Tinkum and I have lived about, a good deal, in our day; and old Andries is a desp'ate hand for the woods. He surveyed out for us, once, or half-surveyed, another betterment; but he proved to be a spiteful rogue afore he got through with the business; and we have not set much store by him ever sin' that time."

"The Chainbearer a rogue! Andries Coejemans anything but an honest man! You are the first person, Mrs. Tinkum, I have ever heard call in question his sterling integrity."

"Sterling money does n't pass now, I conclude, sin' it 's Revolution times. We all know which side your family was on in the war, Major Littlepage; so it 's no offence to you. A proper sharp lookout they had of it here, when you quit college; for some said old Herman Mordaunt had ordered in his will that you should uphold the king; and

then, most of the tenants concluded they would get the lands altogether. It is a sweet thing, major, for a tenant to get his farm without paying for it, as you may judge! Some folks was desp'ate sorry when they heern tell that the Littlepages went with the colonies."

"I hope there are few such knaves on the Ravensnest estate as to wish anything of the sort. But let me hear an explanation of your charge against the Chainbearer. I have no great concern for my own rights in the patent that I claim."

The woman had the audacity, or the frankness, to draw a long, regretful sigh, as it might be, in my very face. That sigh expressed her regrets that I had not taken part with the crown in the last struggle; in which case, I do suppose, she and Tinkum would have contrived to squat on one of the farms of Ravensnest. Having sighed, however, the landlady did not disdain to answer.

"As for the Chainbearer, the simple truth is this," she said. "Tinkum hired him to run a line between some betterments we had bought, and some that had been bought by a neighbor of our'n. This was long afore the war, and when titles were scarcer than they're gettin' to be now; some of the landlords living across the water. Well, what do you think the old fellow did, major? He first asked for our deeds, and we showed them to him; as good and lawful warrantees as was ever printed and filled up by a 'squire. He then set to work, all by himself, jobbing the whull survey, as it might be, and a prettier line was never run, as far as he went, which was about half-way. I thought it would make etarnel peace atween us and our neighbor, for it had been etarnel war afore that, for three whull years; sometimes with clubs, and sometimes with axes, and once with scythes. But somehow—I never knowed how—but somehow, old Andries found out that the man who deeded to us had no deed to himself, or no mortal right to the land, any more than that sucking pig you see at the door there; when he gi'n right up, refusing to carry out another link, or pi'nt another needle, he did! Warn't that being cross-

grained and wilful! No, there 's no dependence to be put on the Chainbearer."

"Wilful in the cause of right, as glorious old Andries always is! I love and honor him all the better for it."

"La! Do you love and honor sich a one as him! Well, I should have expected suthin' else from sich a gentleman as you! I 'd no idee Major Littlepage could honor an old, worn-out chainbearer, and he a man that could n't get up in the world, too, when he had hands and feet, all on 'em together, on some of the very best rounds of the ladder! Why, I judge that even Tinkum would have gone ahead, if he had been born with sich a chance."

"Andries has been a captain in my own regiment, it is true, and was once my superior officer; but he served for his country's sake, and not for his own. Have you seen him lately?"

"That have we! He passed here about a twelvemonth ago, with his whull party, on their way to squat on your own land, or I 'm mistaken. There was the Chainbearer himself, two helpers, Dus, and young Malbone."

"Young who?" I asked, with an interest that induced the woman to turn her keen, sunken, but sharp gray eyes intently on me.

"Young Malbone, I said; Dus's brother, and the youngster who does all old Andries' 'rithmetic. I suppose you know as well I do, that the Chainbearer can't calkerlate any more than a wild goose, and not half as well as a crow. For that matter, I 've known crows that, in plantin' time, would measure a field in half the number of minutes that the State surveyor would be hours at."

"This young Malbone, then, is the Chainbearer's nephew? And he it is who does the surveying?"

"He does the 'rithmetic part, and he is the brother of old Andries' niece. I knowed the Coejemans when I was a gal, and I 've known the Malbones longer than I want to know them."

"Have you any fault to find with the family, that you speak thus of them?"

"Nothin' but their desperate pride, which makes them think themselves so much better than everybody else; yet they tell me, Dus and all on 'em are just as poor as I am myself."

"Perhaps you mistake their feeling, good woman; a thing I think the more probable, as you seem to fancy money the source of their pride, at the very moment you deny their having any. Money is a thing on which few persons of cultivated minds pride themselves. The purse-proud are, almost invariably, the vulgar and ignorant."

No doubt this was a moral thrown away with such an auditor; but I was provoked; and when a man is provoked; he is not always wise. The answer showed the effect it had produced.

"I don't pretend to know how that is; but if it is n't pride, what is it that makes Dus Malbone so different from my da'ters? She 'd no more think of being like one on 'em, scouring about the lots, riding bare-backed, and scampering through the neighborhood, than you 'd think of cooking my dinner—that she would n't."

Poor Mrs. Tinkum—or, as she would have been apt to call herself, Miss Tinkum! She had betrayed one of the commonest weaknesses of human nature, in thus imputing pride to the Chainbearer's niece because the latter behaved differently from her and hers. How many persons in this good republic of ours judge their neighbors on precisely the same principle; inferring something unsuitable, because it seems to reflect on their own behavior! But by this time, I had got to hear the name of Dus with some interest, and I felt disposed to push the subject further.

"Miss Malbone, then," I said, "does not ride bare-backed?"

"La! major, what in natur' puts it into your head to call the gal Miss Malbone! There 's no Miss Malbone living sin' her own mother died."

"Well, Dus Malbone, I mean; she is above riding bare-backed?"

"That she is; even a pillion would be hardly grand enough for her, allowing her own brother to use the saddle."

"Her own brother? This young surveyor, then, is Dus's brother?"

"Sort o', and sort o' not, like. They had the same father, but different mothers."

"That explains it; I never heard the Chainbearer speak of any nephew, and it seems the young man is not related to him at all—he is the half-brother of his niece."

"Why can't that niece behave like other young women? that 's the question I ask. My gals has n't as much pride as would be good for 'em, not they! If a body wants to borrow an article over at the 'Nest, and that 's seven miles off, the whull way in the woods, just name it to Poll, and she 'd jump on an ox, if there warn't a hoss, and away she 'd go a'ter it, with no more bit of a saddle, and maybe nothin' but a halter, like a deer! Give me Poll, afore all the gals I know, for ar'nds!"

By this time, disrelish for vulgarity was getting the better of curiosity; and my dinner of fried pork being done, I was willing to drop the discourse. I had learned enough of Andries and his party to satisfy my curiosity, and Jaap was patiently waiting to succeed me at table. Throwing down the amount of the bill, I took a fowling-piece with which we always travelled in those days, bade Mrs. Tinkum good day, ordered the black and the wagoner to follow with the team as soon as ready, and went on toward my own property on foot.

In a very few minutes I was quite beyond the Tinkum betterments, and fairly in the forest again. It happened that the title to a large tract of land adjoining Ravensnest was in dispute, and no attempt at a serious settlement had ever been made on it. Some one had "squatted" at this spot to enjoy the advantage of selling rum to those who went and came between my own people and the inner country; and the place had changed hands half a dozen times, by fraudulent, or, at least, by worthless sales, from one squatter to another. Around the house, by this time a decaying pile of logs, time had done a part of the work of the settler, and aided by that powerful servant but fearful master, fire, had given to the small clearing somewhat of the

air of civilized cultivation. The moment these narrow limits were passed, however, the traveller entered the virgin forest, with no other sign of man around him than what was offered in the little worked and little travelled road. The highway was not much indebted to the labors of man for any facilities it afforded the traveller. The trees had been cut out of it, it is true, but their roots had not been extracted, and time had done more toward destroying them than the axe or pick. Time had done a good deal however, and the inequalities were getting to be smooth under the hoof and wheel. A tolerably good bridle-path had long been made, and I found no difficulty in walking in it, since that answered equally well for man and beast.

The virgin forest of America is usually no place for the ordinary sportsman. The birds that are called game are but rarely found in it, one or two excepted; and it is a well-known fact that while the frontier-man is certain death with a rifle-bullet, knocking the head off a squirrel or a wild turkey at his sixty or eighty yards, it is necessary to go into the older parts of the country, and principally among sportsmen of the better classes, in order to find those who knock over the woodcock, snipe, quail, grouse, and plover, on the wing. I was thought a good shot on the "plains," and over the heaths or commons of the island of Manhattan, and among the necks of Westchester; but I saw nothing to do up there, where I then was, surrounded by trees that had stood their centuries. It would certainly have been easy enough for me to kill a blue jay now and then, or a crow, or even a raven, or perhaps an eagle, had I the proper shot; but as for anything that is ordinarily thought to adorn a game-bag, not a feather could I see. For the want of something better to do, then, if a young man of three or four and twenty ought thus to express himself, I began to ruminate on the charms of Pris. Bayard, and on the singularities of Dus Malbone. In this mood I proceeded, getting over the ground at a rapid rate, leaving Miss Tinkum, the clearing with its betterments, and the wagon, far behind me.

I had walked an hour alone, when the silence of the woods was suddenly interrupted by the words of a song that

came not from any of the feathered race, though the nightingale itself could hardly have equalled the sweetness of the notes, which were those of a female voice. The low notes struck me as the fullest, richest, and most plaintive I had ever heard; and I fancied they could not be equaled, until the strain carried the singer's voice into a higher key, where it seemed equally at home. I thought I knew the air, but the words were guttural, and in an unknown tongue. French and Dutch were the only two foreign languages in which one usually heard any music in our part of the woods at that day; and even the first was by no means common. But with both these languages I had a little acquaintance, and I was soon satisfied that the words I heard belonged to neither. At length it flashed on my mind that the song was Indian; not the music, but the words. The music was certainly Scotch, or that altered Italian that time has attributed to the Scotch; and there was a moment when I fancied some Highland girl was singing near me one of the Celtic songs of the country of her childhood. But closer attention satisfied me that the words were really Indian; probably belonging to the Mohawk, or some other language that I had often heard spoken.

The reader may be curious to know whence these sounds proceeded, and why I did not see the being who gave birth to such delicious harmony. It was owing to the fact that the song came from out of a thicket of young pines, that grew on an ancient opening at a little distance from the road, and which I supposed contained a hut of some sort or other. These pines, however, completely concealed all within them. So long as the song lasted, no tree of the forest was more stationary than myself; but when it ended, I was about to advance toward the thicket, in order to pry into its mysteries, when I heard a laugh that had scarcely less of melody in it than the strains of the music itself. It was not a vulgar, clamorous burst of girlish impulses, nor was it even loud; but it was light-hearted, mirthful, indicating humor, if a mere laugh *can* do so much; and in a sense it was contagious. It arrested my movement, in order to listen; and before any new impulse led me forward

the branches of the pines opened, and a man passed out of the thicket into the road. A single glance sufficed to let me know that the stranger was an Indian.

Notwithstanding I was apprised of the near vicinity of others, I was a little startled with this sudden apparition. Not so with him who was approaching; he could not have known of my being anywhere near him; yet he manifested no emotion as his cold, undisturbed glance fell on my form. Steadily advancing, he came to the centre of the road, and, as I had turned involuntarily to pursue my own way, not sure it was prudent to remain in that neighborhood alone, the redman fell in, with his moccasined foot, at my elbow, and I found that we were thus strangely pursuing our journey, in the same direction side by side.

The Indian and myself walked in this manner, within a yard of each other, in the midst of that forest, for two or three minutes without speaking. I forbore to say anything, because I had heard that an Indian respected those most who knew best how to repress their curiosity; which habit, most probably, had its effect on my companion. At length the redman uttered, in the deep, guttural manner of his people, the common conventional salutation of the frontier,—

"Sa-a-go?"

This word, which has belonged to some Indian language once, passes everywhere for Indian with the white man; and quite likely for English, with the Indian. A set of such terms has grown up between the two races, including such words as "moccasin," "pappoose," "tomahawk," "squaw," and many others. "Sa-a-go" means "how d' ye do?"

"Sa-a-go?" I answered to my neighbor's civil salutation.

After this we walked along for a few minutes more, neither party speaking. I took this opportunity to examine my red brother, an employment that was all the easier from the circumstance that he did not once look at me; the single glance sufficing to tell him all he wanted to know. In the first place, I was soon satisfied that my companion did not drink, a rare merit in a redman who lived near the

whites. This was evident from his countenance, gait, and general bearing, as I thought, in addition to the fact that he possessed no bottle, or anything else that would hold liquor. What I liked the least was the circumstance of his being completely armed; carrying knife, tomahawk, and rifle, and each seemingly excellent of its kind. He was not painted, however, and he wore an ordinary calico shirt, as was then the usual garb of his people in the warm season. The countenance had the stern severity that is so common to a red warrior; and, as this man was turned of fifty, his features began to show the usual signs of exposure and service. Still, he was a vigorous, respectable-looking red-man, and one who was evidently accustomed to live much among civilized men. I had no serious uneasiness, of course, at meeting such a person, although we were so completely buried in the forest; but, as a soldier, I could not help reflecting how inferior my fowling-piece would necessarily prove to be to his rifle, should he see fit to turn aside, and pull upon me from behind a tree, for the sake of plunder. Tradition said such things had happened; though, on the whole, the red-man of America has perhaps proved to be the more honest of the two, as compared with those who have supplanted him.

"How ole chief?" the Indian suddenly asked, without even raising his eyes from the road.

"Old chief! Do you mean Washington, my friend?"

"Not so—mean ole chief, out here, at 'Nest. Mean fader."

"My father! Do you know General Littlepage?"

"Be sure, know him. Your fader; see"—holding up his two fore-fingers—"just like: dat him; dis you."

"This is singular enough! And were you told that I was coming to this place?"

"Hear dat, too. Always talk about chief."

"Is it long since you saw my father?"

"See him in war-time—nebber hear of ole Sureflint?"

I had heard the officers of our regiment speak of such an Indian, who had served a good deal with the corps and been exceedingly useful, in the two great northern campaigns

especially. He never happened to be with the regiment after I joined it, though his name and services were a good deal mixed up with the adventures of 1776 and 1777.

"Certainly," I answered, shaking the redman cordially by the hand. "Certainly have I heard of you, and something that is connected with times before the war. Did you never meet my father before the war?"

"Sartain; meet in ole war. Gin'ral young man, den—just like son."

"By what name were you then known, Oneida?"

"No Oneida—Onondago—sober tribe. Hab plenty name. Sometimes one, sometimes anoder. Pale-face say 'Trackless,' cause he can't find his trail; warrior call him 'Susquesus.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

"With what free growth the elm and plane
Finding their huge arms across my way;
Gray, old, and cumbered with a train
Of vines, as huge, and old, and gray!
Free stray the lucid streams, and find
No taint in these fresh lawns and shades;
Free spring the flowers that scent the wind,
Where never scythe has swept the glades."

BYRANT.

I HAD heard enough of my father's early adventures to know that the man mentioned in the last chapter had been a conspicuous actor in them, and remembered that the latter enjoyed the fullest confidence of the former. It was news to me, however, that Sureflint and the Trackless were the same person; though, when I came to reflect on the past, I had some faint recollection of having once before heard something of the sort. At any rate, I was now with a friend, and no longer thought it necessary to be on my guard. This was a great relief, in every point of view, as one does not like to travel at the side of a stranger, with an impression, however faint, that the latter may blow his brains out, the first time he ventures to turn his own head aside.

Susquesus was drawing near to the decline of life. Had he been a white man, I might have said he was in a "green old age"; but the term of "*red* old age" would suit him much better. His features were still singularly fine; while the cheeks, without being very full, had that indurated, solid look that flesh and muscles get from use and exposure. His form was as erect as in his best days, a redman's

frame rarely yielding in this way to any pressure but that of exceeding old age, and that of rum. Susquesus never admitted the enemy into his mouth, and consequently the citadel of his physical man was secure against every invader but time. In-toed and yielding in his gait, the old warrior and runner still passed over the ground with an easy movement; and when I had occasion to see him increase his speed, as soon after occurred, I did not fail to perceive that his sinews seemed strung to their utmost force, and that every movement was free.

For a time, the Indian and I talked of the late war, and of the scenes in which each of us had been an actor. If my own modesty was as obvious as that of Sureflint, I had no reason to be dissatisfied with myself; for the manner in which he alluded to events in which I knew he had been somewhat prominent, was simple and entirely free from that boasting in which the redman is prone to indulge; more especially when he wishes to provoke his enemies. At length I changed the current of the discourse, by saying abruptly,—

"You were not alone in that pine thicket, Susquesus; that from which you came when you joined me?"

"No—sartain; was n't alone. Plenty people dere."

"Is there an encampment of your tribe among those bushes?"

A shade passed over the dark countenance of my companion, and I saw a question had been asked that gave him pain. He paused some little time before he answered; and when he did, it was in a way that seemed sad.

"Susquesus got tribe no longer. Quit Onondagos t'irty summer, now; don't like Mohawk."

"I remember to have heard something of this from my father, who told me, at the same time, that the reason why you left your people was to your credit. But you had music in the thicket?"

"Yes; gal sing—gal love sing; warrior like to listen."

"And the song? In what language were the words?"

"Onondago," answered the Indian, in a low tone.

"I had no idea the music of the red people was so sweet. It is many a day since I have heard a song that went so

near to my heart, though I could not understand what was said."

"Bird, pretty bird—sing like wren."

"And is there much of this music in your family, Susquesus? If so, I shall come often to listen."

"Why not come? Path got no brier; short path, too. Gal sing when you want."

"Then I shall certainly be your guest, some day, soon. Where do you live now? Are you Sureflint, or Trackless to-day? I see you are armed, but not painted."

"Hatchet buried berry deep, dis time. No dig him up in great many year. Mohawk make peace; Oneida make peace; Onondago make peace—all bury 'e hatchet."

"Well, so much the better for us landholders. I have come to sell and lease my lands; perhaps you can tell me if many young men are out hunting for farms this summer?"

"Wood full. Plenty as pigeons. How you sell land?"

"That will depend on where it is, and how good it is. Do you wish to buy, Trackless?"

"Injin own all land for what he want now. I make wigwam where I want; make him, too, when I want."

"I know very well that you Indians do claim such a right; and, so long as the country remains in its present wild state, no one will be apt to refuse it to you. But you cannot plant and gather, as most of your people do in their own country."

"Got no squaw—got no pappoose—little corn do for Susquesus. No tribe—no squaw—no pappoose!"

This was said in a low, deliberate voice, and with a species of manly melancholy that I found very touching. Complaining men create very little sympathy, and those who whine are apt to lose our respect; but I know no spectacle more imposing than that of one of stern nature smothering his sorrows beneath the mantle of manliness and self-command.

"You have friends, Susquesus," I answered, "if you have no wife nor children."

"Fader, good friend; hope son friend, too. Grandfader great friend, once; but he gone far away, and nebber come back. Know moder, know fader—all good."

"Take what land you want, Trackless—till it, sell it—do what you wish with it."

The Indian eyed me keenly, and I detected a slight smile of pleasure stealing over his weather-worn face. It was not easy to throw him off his habitual guard over his emotions, however; and the gleam of illumination passed away like a ray of sunshine in midwinter. The sternest white man might have grasped my hand, and something like a sign of gratitude would probably have escaped him; but, the little trace of emotion I have mentioned having disappeared, nothing remained on the dark visage of my companion that in the least resembled an evidence of yielding to any of the gentler feelings. Nevertheless, he was too courteous, and had too much of the innate sentiment of a gentleman, not to make some return for an offer that had so evidently and spontaneously come from the heart.

"Good!" he said, after a long pause. "Berry good, dat; good, to come from young warrior to ole warrior. T'ankee: bird plenty; fish plenty; message plenty, now; and don't want land. Time come, maybe—s'pose he must come—come to all old redmen, hereabout; so s'pose must come."

"What time do you mean, Trackless? Let it come when it may, you have a friend in me. What time do you mean, my brave old Sureflint?"

The Trackless stopped, dropped the breech of his rifle on the ground, and stood meditating a minute, motionless, and as grand as some fine statue.

"Yes; time come, do s'pose," he continued. "One time, ole warrior live in wigwam, and tell young warrior of scalp, and council-fire, and hunt, and war-path; now, make broom and basket."

It was not easy to mistake this; and I do not remember ever to have felt so lively an interest, on so short an acquaintance, as I began to feel in this Onondago. Priscilla Bayard herself, however lovely, graceful, winning, and feminine, had not created a feeling so strong and animated as that which was awakened within me in behalf of old Sureflint. But I fully understood that this was to be shown in

acts, and not in words. Contenting myself for the present, after the fashion of the pale-faces, by grasping and squeezing the sinewy hand of the warrior, we walked on together, making no further allusion to a subject that I can truly say was as painful to me as it was to my companion.

"I have heard your name mentioned as one of those who were at the 'Nest with my father when he was a young man, Susquesus," I resumed, "and when the Canada Indians attempted to burn the house."

"Good! Susquesus dere—young Dutch chief kill dat time."

"Very true; his name was Guert Ten Eyck; and my father and mother, and your old friend Colonel Follock, who was afterward major of our regiment, you will remember, they love his memory to this day, as that of a very dear friend."

"Dat all, love memory now?" asked the Indian, throwing one of his keenest glances at me.

I understood the allusion, which was to Aunt Mary, whom I had heard spoken of as the betrothed, or at least as the beloved, of the young Albanian.

"Not all; for there is a lady who still mourns his loss, as if she had been his widow."

"Good! do' squaw don't mourn fery long time. Sometime; not always."

"Pray, Trueflint, do you happen to know anything of a man called the Chainbearer? He was in the regiment, too, and you must have seen him in the war."

"Sartain; know Chainbearer—know him on war-path—know him when hatchet buried. Knew Chainbearer afore ole French war. Live in wood wid him—one of us. Chainbearer my friend."

"I rejoice to hear this, for he is also mine; and I shall be glad to come into the compact, as a friend of both."

"Good! Susquesus and young landlord friend of Chainbearer—good!"

"It is good, and a league that shall not be forgotten easily by me. The Chainbearer is as honest as light, and as certain as his own compass, Trueflint—true as yourself."

"'Fraid he make broom 'fore great while, too," said the Indian, expressing the regret I have no doubt he felt, very obviously in his countenance.

Poor old Andries! But for the warm and true friends he had in my father, Colonel Dirck, and myself, there was some danger this might be the case, indeed. The fact that he had served his country in a revolution would prove of little avail, that country being too poor to provide for its old servants, and possibly indisposed, had she the means.[1] I say this without intending to reflect on either the people or the government; for it is not easy to make the men of the present day understand the deep depression, in a pecuniary sense, that rested on the land for a year or two after peace was made. It recovered, as the child recovers from indisposition, by the vigor of its constitution and the power of its vitality; and one of the means by which it recovered was by turning to the soil, and wielding the sickle instead of the sword. To continue the discourse.

"The Chainbearer is an honest man, and, like too many of his class, poor," I answered; "but he has friends; and neither he nor you, Sureflint, shall be reduced to that woman's work without your own consent, so long as I have an unoccupied house, or a farm at Ravensnest."

Again the Indian manifested his sense of my friendship

[1] This must pass for one of the hits the Republic is exposed to, partly because it deserves them, and partly because it is a republic. One hears a great deal of this ingratitude of republics, but few take the trouble of examining into the truth of the charge, or its reason, if true. I suppose the charge to be true in part, and for the obvious reason that a government founded on the popular will is necessarily impulsive in such matters, and feels no necessity to be just, in order to be secure. Then, a democracy is always subject to the influence of the cant of economy, which is next thing to the evil of being exposed to the waste and cupidity of those who take because they have the power. As respects the soldiers of the Revolution, however, America, under the impulsive feeling, rather than in obedience to a calm, deliberate desire to be just, has, since the time of Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage, made such a liberal provision for pensioning them as to include a good many of her enemies, as well as all her friends. —EDITOR.

for him by that passing gleam on his dark face; and again all signs of emotion passed slowly away.

"How long since see him?" he asked me suddenly.

"See him—the Chainbearer, do you mean? I have not seen him, now, for more than a twelvemonth; not since we parted when the regiment was disbanded."

"Don't mean Chainbearer—mean him," pointing ahead; "house, tree, farm, land, 'Nest."

"Oh! How long is it since I saw the patent. I never saw it, Sureflint; this is my first visit."

"Dat queer! How you own land, when nebber see him?"

"Among the pale-faces we have such laws that property passes from parent to child; and I inherit mine in this neighborhood from my grandfather, Herman Mordaunt."

"What dat mean, 'herit? How man haf land, when he don't keep him?"

"We do keep it, if not by actually remaining on the spot, by means of our laws and our titles. The pale-faces regulate all these things on paper, Sureflint."

"T'ink dat good? Why not let man take land where he want him, when he want him? Plenty land. Got more land dan got people. 'Nough for ebberybody."

"That fact makes our laws just; if there were not land enough for everybody, these restrictions and divisions might seem to be, and in fact be, unjust. Now, any man can have a farm, who will pay a very moderate price for it. The State sells, and landlords sell; and those who don't choose to buy of one, can buy of the other."

"Dat true 'nough; but don't see need of dat paper. When he want to stay on land, let him stay; when he want to go somewhere, let 'noder man come. What good pay for betterment?"

"So as to have betterments. These are what we call the rights of property, without which no man could aim at being anything more than clad and fed. Who would hunt, if anybody that came along had a right to pick up and skin his game?"

"See dat well 'nough—nebber do; no, nebber. Don't

see why land go like skin, when skin go wid warrior and hunter, and land stay where he be."

"That is because the riches of you redmen are confined to movable property, and to your wigwams, so long as you choose to live in them. Thus far, you respect the rights of property as well as the pale-faces; but you must see a great difference between your people and mine!—between the redman and the white man?"

"Be sure, differ; one strong, t'oder weak; one rich, t'oder poor; one great, t'oder little; one drive 'way, t'oder haf to go; one gets all, t'oder keep nuttin'; one march large army, t'oder go Indian file, fifty warrior, p'raps—dat reason t'ing so."

"And why can the pale-faces march in large armies, with cannon, and horses, and bayonets, and the redman not do the same?"

"Cause he no got 'em; no got warrior—no got gun—no got baggonet—no got nuttin'."

"You have given the effect for the cause, Sureflint, or the consequences of the reason for the reason itself. I hope I make you understand me. Listen, and I will explain. You have lived much with the white men, Susquesus, and can believe what I say. There are good, and there are bad, among all people. Color makes no difference in this respect. Still, all people are not alike. The white man is stronger than the redman, and has taken away his country, because he knows most."

"He most, too. Count army, den count war-trail; you see."

"It is true the pale-faces are the most numerous, now; but once they were not. Do not your traditions tell you how few the Yengeese were, when they first came across the salt lake?"

"Come in big canoe—two, t'ree full—no more."

"Why then did two or three shipfuls of white men become so strong as to drive back from the sea all the red warriors, and become masters of the land? Can you give a reason for that?"

"'Cause he bring fire-water wid him, and redman big fool to drink."

"Even that fire-water, which doubtless has proved a cruel gift to the Indians, is one of the fruits of the white man's knowledge. No, Susquesus; the redskin is as brave as the pale-face; as willing to defend his rights, and as able-bodied; but he does not know as much. He had no gunpowder until the white man gave it to him—no rifle, no hoe, no knife, no tomahawk, but such as he made himself from stones. Now, all the knowledge, and all the arts of life that the white man enjoys and turns to his profit, come from the rights of property. No man would build a wigwam to make rifles in, if he thought he could not keep it as long as he wished, sell it when he pleased, and leave it to his son when he went to the land of spirits. It is by encouraging man's love of himself, in this manner, that he is got to do so much. Thus it is, too, that the father gives to the son what he has learned, as well as what he has built or bought; and so, in time, nations get to be powerful, as they get to be what we call civilized. Without these rights of property, no people could be civilized; for no people would do their utmost, unless each man were permitted to be master of what he can acquire, subject to the great and common laws that are necessary to regulate such matters. I hope you understand my meaning, Trackless."

"Sartain; no like Trackless' moccasin—my young friend's tongue leave trail. But you t'ink Great Spirit say who shall haf land; who no haf him?"

"The Great Spirit has created man as he is, and the earth as it is; and He has left the one to be master of the other. If it were not his pleasure that man should not do as he has done, it would not be done. Different laws and different feelings would then bring about different ends. When the law places all men on a level, as to rights, it does as much as can be expected of it. Now, this level does not consist in pulling everything to pieces periodically, but in respecting certain great principles that are just in themselves; but which, once started, must be left to follow their

own course. When the rights of property are first established, they must be established fairly, on some admitted rule; after which they are to remain inviolable—that is to say, sacred."

"Understand—no live in clearin' for nuttin'. Mean, haf no head widout haf farm."

"That is the meaning, substantially, Sureflint; though I might have explained it a little differently. I wish to say pale-faces would be like the redman without civilization; and without civilization if they had no rights in their land. No one will work for another as he will work for himself. We see that every day, in the simplest manner, when we see that the desire to get good wages will not make the common laborer do as much by the day as he will do by the job.

"Dat true," answered the Indian, smiling; for he seldom laughed; and repeating a common saying of the country: "By de day; by de day—by de job, job, job! Dat pale-face religion, young chief."

"I don't know that our religion has much to do with it; but I will own it is our practice. I fancy it is the same with all races and colors. A man must work for himself to do his most; and he cannot work for himself unless he enjoy the fruits of his labor. Thus it is, that he must have a right of property in land, either bought or hired, in order to make him cause that land to produce all that nature intended it should produce. On this necessity is founded the rights of property; the gain being civilization; the loss ignorance, and poverty, and weakness. It is for this reason, then, that we buy and sell land, as well as clothes, and arms, and beads."

"T'ink, understand. Great Spirit, den, say must have farm?"

"The Great Spirit has said we must have wants and wishes, that can be met, or gratified, only by having farms. To have farms we must have owners; and owners cannot exist unless their rights in their lands are protected. As soon as these are gone, the whole building would tumble down about our ears, Susquesus."

"Well s'pose him so. We see, some time. Young chief know where he is?"

"Not exactly; but I suppose we are drawing near to the lands of Ravensnest."

"Well, queer 'nough, too! Own land, but don't know him. See—marked tree—dat sign your land begin."

"Thank you, Sureflint—a parent would not know his own child, when he saw him for the first time. If I am owner here, you will remember that this is my first visit to the spot."

While conversing, the Trackless had led me from the highway into a foot-path, which, as I afterward discovered, made a short cut across some hills, and saved us near two miles in the distance. In consequence of this change in our course, Jaap could not have overtaken me, had he moved faster than he did; but, owing to the badness of the road, our gait on foot was somewhat faster than that of the jaded beasts that dragged the wagon. My guide knew the way perfectly; and as we ascended a hill, he pointed out the remains of an old fire, near a spring, as a spot where he was accustomed to "camp," when he wished to remain near, but not in, the 'Nest.

"Too much rum in tavern," he said. "No good stay near rum."

This was extraordinary forbearance for an Indian; but Susquesus, I had ever understood, was an extraordinary Indian. Even for an Onondago, he was temperate and self-denying. The reason why he lived away from his tribe was a secret from most persons; though I subsequently ascertained it was known to the Chainbearer, as well as my father. Old Andries always affirmed it was creditable to his friend; but he would never betray the secret. Indeed, I found that the sympathy which existed between these two men, each of whom was so singular in his way, was cemented by some occurrences of their early lives, to which occasional but vague allusions were made, but which neither ever revealed to me, or to any other person, so far as I could ascertain.

Soon after passing the spring, Sureflint led me out to a

cleared spot on the eminence, which commanded an extensive view of most of that part of my possessions which was under lease and occupied. Here we halted, seating ourselves on a fallen tree, for which one could never go amiss in that region, and at that day; and I examined the view with the interest which ownership is apt to create in us all. The earth is very beautiful in itself; but it is most beautiful in the eyes of those who have the largest stake in it, I fear.

Although the property of Ravensnest had been settled fully thirty years when I first saw it, none of those signs of rapid and energetic improvement were visible that we have witnessed in the efforts of similar undertakings since the Revolution. Previously to that great event, the country filled up very slowly, and each colony seemed to regard itself in some measure as a distinct country. Thus it was that we in New York obtained very few immigrants from New England, that great hive which has so often swarmed since, and the bees of which have carried their industry and ingenuity over so much of the Republic in our own time. We of New York have our prejudices against the Yankees, and have long looked upon them with eyes of distrust and disfavor. They have repaid us in kind, perhaps; but their dislikes have not been strong enough to prevent them from coming to take possession of our lands. For my own part, while I certainly see much in the New England character that I do not like (more in their manners and minor ways, perhaps, than in essentials), I as certainly see a great deal to command my respect. If the civilization that they carry with them is not of a very high order, as is connected with the tastes, sentiments, and nicer feelings, it is superior to that of any other country I have visited, in its common-sense provisions, and in its care over the intellectual being, considered in reference to the foundations of learning. More persons are dragged from out the mire of profound ignorance under their system, than under that of any other people; and a greater number of candidates are brought forward for intellectual advancements. That so few of these candidates rise very high on

the scale of knowledge is in part owing to the circumstance that their lives are so purely practical; and, possibly, in part to the fact that while so much attention has been paid to the foundations of the social edifice, little art or care has as yet been expended on the superstructure. Nevertheless, the millions of Yankees that are spreading themselves over the land are producing, and have already produced, a most salutary influence on its practical knowledge, on its enterprise, on its improvements, and consequently on its happiness. If they have not done much for its tastes, its manners, and its higher principles, it is because no portion of the earth is perfect. I am fully aware that this is conceding more than my own father would have conceded in their favor, and twice as much as could have been extracted from either of my grandfathers. But prejudice is wearing away, and the Dutchman and the Yankee, in particular, find it possible to live in proximity and charity. It is possible that my son may be willing to concede even more. Our immigrant friends should remember one thing, however, and it would render them much more agreeable as companions and neighbors, which is this: he who migrates is bound to respect the habits and opinions of those whom he joins; it not being sufficient for the perfection of everything under the canopy of heaven, that it should come from our own little corner of the earth. Even the pumpkin-pies of the Middle States are vastly better than those usually found in New England. To return to Ravensnest.

The thirty years of the settlement of my patent, then, had not done much for it, in the way of works of art. Time, it is true, had effected something, and it was something in a manner that was a little peculiar, and which might be oftener discovered in the country at the time of which I am writing, than at the present day. The timber of the 'Nest, with the exception of some mountain-land, was principally what, in American parlance, is termed "hard wood." In other words, the trees were not perennial, but deciduous; and the merest tyro in the woods knows that the roots of the last decay in a fourth of the time that the roots of the first endure, after the trunk is severed. As a consequence, the stumps had nearly

all disappeared from the fields; a fact that, of itself, gave to the place the appearance of an old country, according to our American notions. It is true, the virgin forest still flourished in immediate contact with those fields, shorn, tilled, and smoothed as they were, giving a wild and solemn setting to the rural picture the latter presented. The contrast was sufficiently bold and striking, but it was not without its soft and pleasant points. From the height whither the Indian had led me, I had a foreground of open land, dotted with cottages and barns, mostly of logs, beautified by flourishing orchards, and garnished with broad meadows, or enriched by fields, in which the corn was waving under the currents of a light summer air. Two or three roads wound along the settlement, turning aside with friendly interest, to visit every door; and at the southern termination of the open country, there was a hamlet, built of wood framed, which contained one house that had little taste, but a good deal more of pretension than any of its neighbors; another that was an inn; a store, a blacksmith's-shop, a school-house, and three or four other buildings, besides barns, sheds, and hog-pens. Near the hamlet, or the "'Nest Village," as the place was called, were the mills of the region. These were a grist-mill, a saw-mill, a fulling-mill, and an oil-mill. All were of moderate dimensions, and, most probably, of moderate receipts. Even the best house was not painted, though it had some very ambitious attempts at architecture, and enjoyed the benefits of no less than four exterior doors, the uses of one of which, as it opened into the air from the second story, it was not very easy to imagine. Doubtless some great but unfinished project of the owner lay at the root of this invention. But living out of doors, as it were, is rather a characteristic of a portion of our people.

The background of this picture, to which a certain degree of rural beauty was not wanting, was the "boundless woods." Woods stretched away, north and south and east, far as eye could reach; woods crowned the sides and summits of all the mountains in view; and woods rose up, with their leafy carpeting, from out the ravines and dells. The war had prevented any very recent attempts at clearing,

and all the open ground wore the same aspect of homely cultivation, while the dark shades of an interminable forest were spread around, forming a sort of mysterious void, that lay between this obscure and remote people, and the rest of their kind. That forest, however, was not entirely savage. There were other settlements springing up in its bosom; a few roads wound their way through its depths; and, here and there, the hunter, the squatter, or the redman, had raised his cabin, and dwelt amid the sullen but not unpleasant abundance and magnificence of the wilderness.

CHAPTER IX.

"O masters! if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honorable men;
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honorable men."

Julius Cæsar.

"THIS, then, is Ravensnest!" I exclaimed, after gazing on the scene for several minutes in silence; "the estate left me by my grandfather, and where events once occurred that are still spoken of in my family as some of the most momentous in its history; events, Susquesus, in which you were an actor."

The Indian made a low interjection, but it is not probable he fully understood me. What was there so remarkable in a savage inroad, a house besieged, men slain, and scalps taken, that he should remember such things for a quarter of a century!

"I do not see the 'Nest itself, Trueflint," I added; "the house in which my grandfather once lived."

The Onondago did not speak, but he pointed with a finger in a northeasterly direction, making the action distinct and impressive, as is usual with his people. I knew the place by the descriptions I had heard, though it was now mouldering, and had gone far into decay. Logs piled up green, and confined in such a structure, will last some thirty or forty years, according to the nature of the trees from which they come, and the manner in which they have been covered. At that distance I could not well distinguish how

far, or how much, time had done its work; but I fancied I knew enough of such matters to understand I was not to expect in the 'Nest a very comfortable home. A family dwelt in the old place, and I had seen some cheeses that had been made on the very fine farm that was attached to it. There was a large and seemingly a flourishing orchard, and the fields looked well; but as for the house, at that distance it appeared sombre, dark, and was barely to be distinguished by its form and chimneys, from any other pile of logs.

I was struck with the silent, dreamy, Sabbath-like air of the fields, far and near. With the exception of a few half-naked children who were visible around the dwellings to which we were the closest, not a human being could I discover. The fields were tenantless, so far as men were concerned, though a good many horned cattle were to be seen grazing.

"My tenants are not without stock, I find, Trueflint," I remarked. "There are plenty of cattle in the pastures."

"You see, all young;" answered the Onondago. "War do dat. Kill ole one for soldier."

"By the way, as this settlement escaped plunder, I should think its people may have done something by selling supplies to the army. Provisions of all kinds were very high and scarce, I remember, when we met Burgoyne."

"Sartain. Your people sell both side—good trade, den. Feed Yankees—feed Yengeese."

"Well, I make no doubt it was so; for the husbandman is not very apt to hesitate when he can get a good price; and if he were, the conscience of the drover would stand between him and treason. But where are all the men of this country? I do not see a single man, far or near."

"No see him!—dere," answered the Indian, pointing in the direction of the hamlet. "'Squire light council-fire to-day, s'pose, and make speech."

"True enough; there they are, gathered about the school-house. But whom do you mean by the 'squire, who is so fond of making speeches?"

"Ole school-master. Come from salt lake—great friend of grandfader."

"Oh! Mr. Newcome, my agent—true; I might have known that he was king of the settlement. Well, Trueflint, let us go on; and when we reach the tavern we shall be able to learn what the 'great council' is about. Say nothing of my business; for it will be pleasant to look on a little, before I speak myself."

The Indian arose, and led the way down the height, following a foot-path with which he appeared to be familiar. In a few minutes we were in a highway, and at no great distance from the hamlet. I had laid aside most of the dress that it was the fashion of gentlemen to wear in 1784, and put on a hunting-shirt and leggings, as more fitting attire for the woods; consequently it would not have been easy for one who was not in the secret to imagine that he who arrived on foot, in such a garb, carrying his fowling-piece, and accompanied by an Indian, was the owner of the estate. I had sent no recent notice of my intended arrival; and as we went along, I took a fancy to get a faint glimpse of things *incognito*. In order to do this, it might be necessary to say a word more to the Indian.

"Susquesus," I added, as we drew near the school-house, which stood between us and the tavern, "I hope you have understood me; there is no need of telling any one who I am. If asked, you can answer I am your friend. That will be true, as you will find as long as you live."

"Good! young chief got eyes; want to look wid 'em himself. Good! Susquesus know."

In another minute we stopped in the crowd, before the door of the school-house. The Indian was so well known, and so often at the 'Nest, that his appearance excited no attention. Some important business appeared on the carpet, for there was much caucusing, much private conversation, many eager faces, and much putting together of heads. While the public mind was thus agitated, few were disposed to take any particular notice of me, though I had not stood long in the outer edge of the crowd, which may have contained sixty or seventy men, besides quite as many well-grown lads, before I overheard an interrogatory put, as to who I was, and whether I had "a right to vote." My

curiosity was a good deal excited, and I was on the point of asking some explanation, when a man appeared in the door of the school-house, who laid the whole matter bare, in a speech. This person had a shrivelled, care-worn, but keen look, and was somewhat better dressed than most around him, though not particularly elegant, or even very neat, in his toilette. He was gray-headed, of a small, thin figure, and might have been drawing hard upon sixty. He spoke in a deliberate, self-possessed manner, as if long accustomed to the sort of business in which he was engaged, but in a very decided Connecticut accent. I say Connecticut, in contradistinction to that of New England generally; for while the Eastern States have many common peculiarities in this way, a nice and practised ear can tell a Rhode Islander from a Massachusetts man, and a Connecticut man from either. As the orator opened his mouth to remove a chew of tobacco previously to opening it to speak, a murmur near me said, "Hist! there 's the squire; now we shall get suthin'." This, then, was Mr. Jason Newcome, my agent, and the principal resident in the settlement.

"Fellow-citizens," Mr. Newcome commenced, "you are assembled this day, on a most important, and, I may say trying occasion; an occasion calculated to exercise all our spirits. Your business is to decide on the denomination of the church building that you are about to erect; and the futur' welfare of your souls may, in one sense, be said to be interested in your decision. Your deliberations have already been opened by prayer; and now you are about to come to a final vote. Differences of opinion have, and do exist among you; but differences of opinion exist everywhere. They belong to liberty, the blessings of which are not to be enj'yed without full and free differences of opinion. Religious liberty demands differences of opinion, as a body might say; and without them, there would be no religious liberty. You all know the weighty reason there is for coming to some conclusion speedily. The owner of the sile will make his appearance this summer, and his family are all of a desperate tendency toward an idolatrous church, which is unpleasant to most of you. To prevent any con-

sequences, therefore, from his interference, we ought to decide at once, and not only have the house raised, but ruffed in afore he arrives. Among ourselves, however, we have been somewhat divided, and that is a different matter. On the former votes, it has stood twenty-six for Congregational to twenty-five Presbytery, fourteen Methodist, nine Baptist, three Universal, and one Episcopal. Now, nothin' is clearer than that the majority ought to rule, and that it is the duty of the minority to submit. My first decision, as moderator, was that the Congregationals have it by a majority of one, but some being dissatisfied with that opinion, I have been ready to hear reason, and to take the view that twenty-six is not a majority, but a plurality, as it is called. As twenty-six, or twenty-five, however, is a majority over nine, and over three, and over one, taking their numbers singly or together, your committee report that the Baptists, Universals, and Episcopals ought to be dropped, and that the next vote, now to be taken, shall be confined to the three highest numbers; that is to say, to the Congregationals, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists. Everybody has a right to vote for which he pleases, provided he vote for one of them three. I suppose I am understood, and shall now put the question, unless some gentleman has any remarks to make."

"Mr. Moderator," cried out a burly, hearty-looking yeoman, "is it in order now to speak?"

"Quite so, sir; order, gentlemen, order! Major Hosmer is up."

Up we all were, if standing on one's feet be up; but the word was parliamentary, and it appeared to be understood.

"Mr. Moderator, I am of the Baptist order, and I do not think the decision just; sin' it compels us Baptists to vote for a denomination we don't like, or not to vote at all."

"But you will allow that the majority ought to rule?" interrupted the chair.

"Sartain—I agree to that; for that is a part of my religion, too," returned the old yeoman heartily, and with an air of perfect good faith; "the majority ought to rule; but I do not see that a majority is in favor of the Congregationals any more than it is of the Baptists."

"We will put it to vote ag'in, major, just for your satisfaction," returned Mr. Newcome, with an air of great candor and moderation. "Gentlemen, those of you who are in favor of the Baptists not being included in the next vote for denomination will please to hold up your hands."

As every man present who was not a Baptist voted "aye," there were sixty-nine hands shown. The "no's" were then demanded in the same way, and the Baptists got their nine own votes, as before. Major Hosmer admitted he was satisfied, though he looked as if there might be something wrong in the procedure, after all. As the Baptists were the strongest of the three excluded sects, the other two made a merit of necessity and said nothing. It was understood they were in a minority; and a minority, as it very often happens in America, has very few rights.

"It now remains, gentlemen," resumed the moderator, who was a model of submission to the public voice, "to put the vote, as between the Congregationals, the Presbyterians, and the Methodists. I shall first put the Congregationalists. Those who are in favor of that sect, the old Connecticut standing order, will please to hold up their hands."

The tone of voice, the coaxing expression of the eye, and the words "old Connecticut standing order," let me at once into the secret of the moderator's wishes. At first but thirty-four hands appeared; but the moderator having counted these, he looked round the crowd, until he fairly looked up three more; after which he honestly enough announced the vote to be thirty-seven for the Congregationalists. So eleven of the thirteen of silenced sects had most probably voted with the moderator. The Presbyterians came next, and they got their own people, and two of the Baptists, making twenty-seven in all, on a trial in their behalf. The Methodists got only their own fourteen.

"It evidently appearing, gentlemen," said the moderator, "that the Methodists gain no strength, and being less than half the Congregational vote, and much lower than the Presbyterian, I put it to their own well-known Christian humility, whether they ought not to withdraw?"

"Put it openly to vote, as you did agin us," came out a Baptist.

"Is that your pleasure, gentlemen? Seeing that it is, I will now try the vote. Those who are in favor of the Methodists withdrawing, will hold up their hands."

Sixty-four hands were raised for, and fourteen against the withdrawal.

"It is impossible for any religion to flourish agin such a majority," said the moderator, with great apparent candor; "and though I regret it, for I sincerely wish we were strong enough to build meetin'-houses for every denomination in the world—but as we are not, we must take things as they are, and so the Methodists must withdraw. Gentlemen, the question is now narrowed down to the Congregationals and the Presbyterians. There is not much difference between them, and it is a thousand pities there should be any. Are you ready for the question, gentlemen? No answer being given, I shall put the vote."

And the vote was put, the result being thirty-nine to thirty-nine, or a tie. I could see that the moderator was disappointed, and supposed he would claim a casting vote, in addition to the one he had already given; but I did not know my man. Mr. Newcome avoided all appearances of personal authority; majorities were his cardinal rule, and to majorities alone he would defer. Whenever he chose to govern, it was by means of majorities. The exercise of a power as accidentally bestowed as that of presiding officer might excite heart-burnings and envy; but he who went with a majority was certain of having the weight of public sympathies on his side. No, no; Mr. Newcome never had an opinion, as against numbers.

I am sorry to say that very mistaken notions of the power of majorities are beginning to take root among us. It is common to hear it asserted, as a political axiom, that the majority *must* rule! This axiom may be innocent enough, when its application is properly made, which is simply to say that in the control of those interests of which the decision is referred to majorities, majorities must rule; but God forbid that majorities should ever rule in all things, in this

Republic or anywhere else! Such a state of things would soon become intolerable, rendering the government that admitted of its existence the most odious tyranny that has been known in Christendom in modern times. The government of this country is the sway of certain great and incontestable principles, that are just in themselves, and which are set forth in the several constitutions, and under which certain minor questions are periodically referred to local majorities, as of necessity, out of the frequency of which appeals has arisen a mistake that is getting to be dangerously general. God forbid, I repeat, that a mere personal majority should assume the power which alone belongs to principles.

Mr. Newcome avoided a decision, as from the chair; but three several times did he take the vote, and each time was there a tie. I could now perceive that he was seriously uneasy. Such steadiness denoted that men had made up their minds, and that they would be apt to adhere to them, since one side was apparently as strong as the other. The circumstance called for a display of democratical tactics; and Mr. Newcome being very expert in such matters, he could have little difficulty in getting along with the simple people with whom he had to deal.

"You see how it is, fellow-citizens. The public has taken sides, and formed itself into two parties. From this moment the affair must be treated as a party question, and be decided on party principles; though the majority must rule. Oh! here, neighbor Willis; will you just step over to my house, and ask Miss Newcome" (*Anglice*, Mrs. Newcome) "to hand you the last volume of the State Laws? Perhaps they have a word to say in the matter." Here neighbor Willis did as desired, and moved out of the crowd. As I afterwards discovered, he was a warm Presbyterian, who happened, unfortunately for his sect, to stand so directly before the moderator, as unavoidably to catch his eye. I suspected that 'Squire Newcome would now call a vote on the main question. But I did not know my man. This would have been too palpably a trick, and he carefully avoided committing the blunder. There was plenty of time, since the mod-

erator knew his wife could not very readily find a book he had lent to a magistrate in another settlement twenty miles off; so that he did not hesitate to have a little private conversation with one or two of his friends.

"Not to be losing time, Mr. Moderator," said one of 'Squire Newcome's confidants, "I will move you that it is the sense of this meeting, that the government of churches by means of a presbytery is anti-republican, opposed to our glorious institutions, and at variance with the best interests of the human family. I submit the question to the public without debate, being content to know the unbiased sentiments of my fellow-citizens on the subject."

The question was duly seconded and put, the result being thirty-nine for, and thirty-eight against; or a majority of one, that Presbyterian rule was anti-republican. This was a great *coup de maître*. Having settled that it was opposed to the institutions to have a presbytery, a great deal was gained toward establishing another denomination in the settlement. No religion can maintain itself against political sentiments in this country, politics coming home daily to men's minds and pockets.

It is odd enough that, while all sects agree in saying that the Christian religion comes from God, and that its dogmas are to be received as the laws of Infinite Wisdom, men should be found sufficiently illogical, or sufficiently presumptuous, to imagine that any, the least, of its rules are to be impaired or strengthened by their dissemblance or their conformity to any provisions of human institutions. As well might it be admitted at once, that Christianity is not of divine origin, or the still more extravagant position be assumed, that the polity which God Himself has established can be amended by any of the narrow and short-sighted devices of men. Nevertheless, it is not to be concealed, that here, as elsewhere, churches are fashioned to suit the institutions, and not the institutions to suit the church.

Having achieved so much success, the moderator's confidant pushed his advantage.

"Mr. Moderator," he continued, "as this question has altogether assumed a party character, it is manifestly proper

that the party which has the majority should not be encumbered in its proceedings by the movements of the minority. Presbytery has been denounced by this meeting, and its friends stand in the light of a defeated party at a State election. They can have nothin' to do with the government. I move, therefore, that those who are opposed to Presbytery go into caucus, in order to appoint a committee to recommend to the majority a denomination which will be acceptable to the people of Ravensnest. I hope the motion will be put without debate. The subject is a religious one, and it is unwise to awaken strife on anything at all connected with religion."

Alas! alas! How much injury has been done to the cause of Christianity, how much wrong to the laws of God, and even to good morals, by appeals of this nature, that are intended to smother inquiry, and force down on the timid the schemes of the designing and fraudulent! Integrity is ever simple and frank; while the devil resorts to these plans of plausible forbearance and seeming concessions, in order to veil his nefarious devices.

The thing took, however; for popular bodies, once under control, are as easily managed as the vessel that obeys her helm; the strength of the current always giving additional power to that material portion of the ship. The motion was accordingly seconded and put. As there was no debate, which had been made to appear anti-religious, the result was precisely the same as on the last question. In other words, there was one majority for disfranchising just one-half the meeting, counting the above man; and this, too, on the principle that the majority ought to rule. After this, the caucus people went into the school-house, where it was understood a committee of twenty-six was appointed, to recommend a denomination to the majority. This committee, so respectable in its character, and of so much influence by its numbers, was not slow in acting. As became its moral weight, it unanimously reported that the Congregational polity was the one most acceptable to the people of Ravensnest. This report was accepted by acclamation, and the caucus adjourned *sine die*.

The moderator now called the whole meeting to order again.

"Mr. Moderator," said the confidant, "it is time that this community should come to some conclusion in the premises. It has been agitated long enough, in its religious feelings, and further delay might lead to unpleasant and lasting divisions. I therefore move that it is the sense of this meetin' that the people of Ravensnest ardently wish to see the new meetin'-us, which is about to be raised, devoted and set apart for the services of the Congregational church, and that a Congregational church be organized, and a Congregational pastor duly called. I trust this question, like all the others, will be passed in perfect harmony, and without debate, as becomes the solemn business we are on."

The question was taken, and the old majority of one was found to be in its favor. Just as Mr. Moderator meekly announced the result, his messenger appeared in the crowd, bawling out, "'Squire, Miss Newcome says she can't noway find the volum', which she kind o' thinks you 've lent."

"Bless me! so I have!" exclaimed the surprised magistrate. "It 's not in the settlement, I declare; but it 's of no importance now, as a majority has fairly decided. Fellow-citizens, we have been dealing with the most important interest that consarns man; his religious state, government, and well-being. Unanimity is very desirable on such a question; and as it is to be presumed no one will oppose the pop'lar will, I shall now put the question to vote for the purpose of obtaining that unanimity. Those who are in favor of the Congregationals, or who ardently wish that denomination, will hold up their hands."

About three fourths of the hands went up at once. Cries of "Unanimity—unanimity!" followed, until one hand after another went up, and I counted seventy-three. The remaining voters continued recusant; but as no question was taken on the other side, the vote may be said to have been a very decided one, if not positively unanimous. The moderator and two or three of his friends made short speeches, commending the liberality of a part of the citizens, and congratulating all, when the meeting was adjourned.

Such were facts attending the establishment of the Congregational church in the settlement of Ravensnest, on purely republican principles; the question having been carried unanimously in favor of that denomination, although fifty-two votes out of seventy-eight were pretty evidently opposed to it. But republican principles were properly maintained, and the matter was settled; the people having solemnly decided that they ardently wished for a church that in truth they did not desire at all.

No complaints were made, on the spot at least. The crowd dispersed, and as Mr. Newcome walked through it, with the air of a beaten, rather than of a successful man, I came under his observation for the first time. He examined me keenly, and I saw a certain air of doubt and misgiving in his manner. Just at that moment, however, and before he had time to put a question, Jaap drove up in the wagon, and the negro was an old acquaintance, having often been at the 'Nest, and knowing the 'squire for more than a quarter of a century. This explained the whole affair, a certain mixed resemblance to both father and mother, which I am said to bear, probably aiding in making the truth more apparent.

Mr. Newcome was startled—that was apparent in his countenance—but he was, nevertheless, self-possessed. Approaching, he saluted me, and at once let me know he understood who I was.

"This is Major Littlepage, I s'pose," he said. "I can see a good deal of the gin'ral in you, as I knowed your father when a young man; and something of Herman Mordaunt, your mother's father. How long is it sin' your arrival, Major Littlepage?"

"But a few minutes," I answered evasively. "You see my wagon and servant, there, and we are fresh from Albany. My arrival has been opportune, as all my tenants must be collected here at this moment."

"Why, yes, sir—yes; here are pretty much the whull of them. We have had a little meetin' to-day, to decide on the natur' of our religion, as one might say. I s'pose the major did n't get here until matters were coming to a head?"

"You are quite right, Mr. Newcome, matters were coming to a head, as you say, before I got on the ground."

The squire was a good deal relieved at this, for his conscience doubtless pricked him a little on the subject of the allusion he had made to me, and my own denomination. As for myself, I was not sorry to have got so early behind the curtain as to the character of my agent. It was pretty clear he was playing his own game as to some things, and it might be necessary for me to see that this propensity did not extend itself into other concerns. It is true, my mind was made up to change him, but there were long and intricate accounts to settle.

"Yes, sir, religion is an interest of the greatest importance to man's welfare, and it has b'en" (*Anglice*, been) "too long neglected among us," continued the late moderator. "You see yonder the frame for a meetin'-us, the first that was ever commenced in this settlement, and it is our intention to put it up this a'ternoon. The bents are all ready. The pike-holes are placed, and all is waiting for the word to 'heave.' You 'll perceive, 'squire, it was judicious to go to a sartain p'int, afore we concluded on the denomination. Up to that p'int every man would nat'rally work as if he was workin' for his own order; and we 've seen the benefit of such policy, as there you can see the clapboards planed, the sash made and glazed, stuff cut for pews, and everything ready to put together. The very nails and paints are bought and paid for. In a word, nothing remains to be done, but to put together, and finish off, and preach."

"Why did you not erect the edifice, 'and finish off,' as you call it, before you came to the test-vote, that I perceive you have just taken?"

"That would have been goin' a le-e-e-tle too far, major —a very le-e-e-tle. If you give a man too tight a hold, he does n't like to let go, sometimes. We talked the matter over among us, and concluded to put the question before we went any further. All has turned out happily, and we have unanimously resolved to be Congregational. Unanimity in religion is a blessed thing!"

"Do you apprehend no falling off in zeal, in consequence

of this work? No refusing to help pay the carpenters, and painters, and priest?"

"Not much—a little, perhaps; but no great matter, I should judge. Your own liberal example, major, has had its influence, and I make no doubt will produce an effect."

"My example, sir? I do not understand you, Mr. Newcome, never having heard of the church, until I heard your own allusions to it, as chairman of this very meeting."

'Squire Newcome hemmed, cleared his throat, took an extra-sized chew of tobacco, and then felt himself equal to attempting an answer.

"I call it your example, sir; though the authority for what I have done came from your honored father, General Littlepage, as long ago as before the Revolution. War-times, you know, major, is no time for buildin' meetin'-uses; so we concluded to defer the matter until peace. Peace we have, and our own eends are fast approaching; and I thought if the work was ever to be done, so that this generation should get the benefit of it, it should be done now. I was in hopes we should have had preachin' in the house afore your arrival, and surprised you with the cheerin' sight of a worshipping people on your lands. Here is your father's letter, from which I read a paragraph to the people, half an hour sin'."

"I trust the people have always been worshippers, though it may not have been in a house built expressly for the purpose. With your permission, I will read the letter."

This document bore the date of 1770, or fourteen years before the time the building was erected, and five years before the battle of Lexington was fought. I was a little surprised at this, but read on. Among other things, I found that my father had given a general consent to credit his tenants with five hundred dollars to aid in the erection of a place of worship; reserving to himself, as my guardian, a voice in the choice of the denomination. I may add, here, that on examining the leases, I found credits had been given, in 1770, for the full amount; and that the money, or what passed for money, the proceeds of work, produce, cattle, butter, cheese, etc., had been in Mr. Newcome's hands the

whole of the intervening time, no doubt to his great advantage. Thus, by a tardy appropriation of my father's bounty, the agent was pretty certain of being able to finish the job in hand, even admitting that some of the people should prove restive under the recent decision.

"And the money thus appropriated has gone to its destination?" I asked, on returning the letter.

"Every copper has thus gone, major, or will soon go. When the first Congregational, of Ravensnest, is up, you can contemplate the house with the satisfaction of knowing that your own money has largely aided in the good work of its erection. What a delightful sentiment that must awaken! It must be a great blessin' to landlords, to be able to remember how much of their money goes for the good of their fellow-mortals."

"In my case, it certainly should, as I understand my father, and indeed have myself seen, by the accounts rendered to me, that not one dollar of rent has ever yet left the settlement, to go into the pocket of the owner of the estate—nay, that the direct outlays of my grandfather were considerable, in addition to the first cost of the patent."

"I do not deny it, major; I do not deny it. It is quite probable. But, you will consider what the spirit of public improvement demands; and you gentlemen-proprietors nat'rally look forward to futur' generations for your reward —yes, sir, to futur' generations. Then will come the time when these leased lands will turn to account, and you will enj'y the fruits of your liberality."

I bowed, but made no answer. By this time the wagon had reached the inn, and Jaap was getting out the trunk and other luggage. A rumor had gone forth among the people that their landlord had arrived, and some of the older tenants, those who had known "Herman Mordaunt," as they all called my grandfather, crowded around me in a frank, hearty manner, in which good feeling was blended with respect. They desired to take my hand. I shook hands with all who came, and can truly say that I took no man's palm into my own that day, without a sentiment that the relation of landlord and tenant was one that should

induce kind and confidential feelings. The Ravensnest property was by no means necessary to my comfortable subsistence; and I was really well enough disposed to look forward, if not to "future generations," at least to a future day, for the advantages that were to be reaped from it. I asked the crowd in, ordered a tub of punch made, for, in that day, liquor was a necessary accompaniment of every welcome, and endeavored to make myself acceptable to my new friends. A throng of women, of whom I have not yet spoken, were also in attendance; and I had to go through the ceremony of being introduced to many of the wives and daughters of Ravensnest. On the whole, the meeting was friendly, and my reception warm.

CHAPTER X.

"Bear, through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,
In thy heart the dew of youth,
On thy lips the smile of truth."

LONGFELLOW.

THE ceremony of the introductions was not half through, when there was a noisy summons to the pike-poles. This called away the crowd in a body; a raising in the country being an incident of too much interest to be overlooked. I profited by the occasion to issue a few orders that related to my own comfort, when I went, myself, to the scene of present toil and future Congregationalism.

Everybody in America, a few inveterate cockneys excepted, has seen a "raising." Most people have seen hundreds; and as for myself, I believe I should be safe in saying I had, even at that day, seen a thousand. In this particular instance, there were great felicitations among the yeomen, because the frame "had come together well." I was congratulated on this score, the hearty old Rhode Islander, my brother major, assuring me that he could n't get the blade of his knife, and "it 's no great matter of a knife either," into a single j'int. "And, what is more, 'squire,"—as the sturdy yeoman was a major himself, though only in the militia, that title would not have been honorable enough for his landlord,—"and, what is more, 'squire, they tell me not a piece was ever tried, until we put the bents together, this a'ternoon, ourselves! Now, down country, I never seed sich a thing; but, up here, the carpenters go by what they call the 'square-rule'; and quick work they make on't!" This speech contained the substance of

one of the contrivances by which the "new countries" were endeavoring to catch up with the "old," as I learned on further inquiries.

It may be well to describe the appearance of the place, when I reached the site of the new "meetin'-us." The great body of the "people" had just taken their stands at the first bent, ready for a lift, while trusty men stood at the feet of the posts, armed with crowbars, broad-axes, or such other suitable implements as offered, in readiness to keep those essential uprights in their places; for on the steadiness of these persons depended the limbs and lives of those who raised the bent. As this structure was larger than common, the danger was increased, and the necessity of having men that could be relied on was obviously so much the greater. Of one post, in particular, for some reason that I do not know, all the trusty men seemed shy; each declaring that he thought some one else better suited to take charge of it, than he was himself. The "boss"—that Manhattanese word having travelled up to Ravensnest—called out for some one to take the delicate station, as nothing detained the work but the want of a hand there; and one looked at another, to see who would step forward, when a sudden cry arose of "The Chainbearer!—the Chainbearer! Here 's your man!"

Sure enough, there came old Andries Coejemans, hale, upright, vigorous, and firm-treading, though he had actually seen his threescore years and ten. My ancient comrade had thrown aside nearly every trace of his late military profession, though the marchings and drillings of eight years were not to be worked out of a man's air in a twelvemonth. The only sign of the soldier, other than in his bearing, I could trace about my brother captain, was the manner in which his queue was clubbed. Andries wore his own hair; this his early pursuits in the forest rendered necessary; but it had long been clubbed in a sort of military fashion, and to that fashion he now adhered. In other respects he had transformed himself entirely into a woodsman. He wore a hunting-shirt, like myself; leggings, moccasins, and a cap of skins that had been deprived of their furs. So far from

lessening in any degree the fine effect of his green old age, however, this attire served to increase it. Andries Coejemans stood six feet, at seventy; was still as erect as he had been at twenty; and so far from betraying the inroads of age on his frame, the last appeared to be indurated and developed by what it had borne. His head was as white as snow, while his face had the ruddy, weather-beaten color of health and exposure. The face had always been handsome, having a very unusual expression of candor and benevolence impressed on features that were bold and manly.

The Chainbearer could not have seen me, until he stepped upon the frame. Then, indeed, there was no mistaking the expression of his countenance, which denoted pleasure and friendly interest. Striding over the timber, with the step of a man long accustomed to tread among dangers of all sorts, he grasped my hand, and gave it such a squeeze as denoted the good condition of his own muscles and sinews. I saw a tear twinkling in his eye; for had I been his own son, I do not think he could have loved me more.

"Mortaunt, my poy, you're heartily welcome," said my old comrade. "You haf come upon t'ese people, I fancy, as t'e cat steals upon t'e mice; but I had titings of your march, and have peen a few miles town t'e roat to meet you. How, or where you got past me, is more t'an I know, for I haf seen nuttin' of you or of your wagon."

"Yet here we both are, my excellent old friend, and most happy am I to meet you again. If you will go with me to the tavern, we can talk more at our ease."

"Enough, enough for t'e present, young comrate. Pusiness is standing still a little, for t'e want of my hant; step off the frame, lat, and let us get up t'hese pents, when I am your man for a week or a year."

Exchanging looks, and renewing the warm and friendly pressure of the hand, we parted for the moment; I quitting the frame, while the Chainbearer went at once to the foot of the important post, or to that station no one else would assume. Then commenced, without further delay, the serious toil of raising a bent. This work is seldom entirely free from hazard; and on this particular occasion, when the force

in men was a little disproportioned to the weight of the timber, it was doubly incumbent on every man to be true and steady. My attention was at once attracted to the business in hand, and for several minutes I thought of little else. The females had drawn as near the spot where their husbands, brothers, and lovers were exerting every muscle and nerve, as comported with prudence; and a profound and anxious quiet pervaded the whole of a crowd that was gay with rustic finery, if not very remarkable for taste or refinement. Still, the cluster of females had little in it that was coarse or even unfeminine, if it had not much that would be so apt to meet the eye, in the way of the attractive, in a similar crowd of the present day. The improvement in the appearance and dress of the wives and daughters of husbandmen has been very marked among us within the last five-and-twenty years. Fully one half of those collected on this occasion were in short gowns, as they were called, a garb that has almost entirely disappeared; and the pillions that were to be seen on the bodies of nearly all the horses that were fastened to the adjacent fences, showed the manner in which they had reached the ground. The calicoes of that day were both dear and homely; and it required money to enable a woman to appear in a dress that would be thought attractive to the least practised eye. Nevertheless, there were many pretty girls in that row of anxious faces, with black eyes and blue, light, black, and brown hair, and of the various forms and hues in which female beauty appears in the youthful.

I flatter myself that I was as comely as the generality of young men of my age and class, and that, on ordinary occasions, I could not have shown myself before that cluster of girls, without drawing to myself some of their glances. Such was not the case, however, when I left the frame, which now attracted all eyes. On that, and on those who surrounded it, every eye and every anxious face was turned, my own included. It was a moment of deep interest to all; and most so to those who could only feel, and not act.

At the word, the men made a simultaneous effort; and they raised the upper part of the bent from the timber on

which it lay. It was easy to see that the laborers, stout and willing as they were, had as much as they could lift. Boys stood ready, however, with short pieces of scantling to place upright beneath the bent; and the men had time to breathe. I felt a little ashamed of having nothing to do at such a moment; but, fearful of doing harm instead of good, I kept aloof, and remained a mere spectator.

"Now, men," said the "boss," who had taken his stand where he could overlook the work, "we will make ready for another lift. All at once makes light work—are you ready? He-e-a-ve!"

Heave, or lift, the stout fellows did; and with so much intelligence and readiness, that the massive timber was carried up as high as their heads. There it stopped, supported, as before, by short pieces of scantling.

The pike-poles next came in play. This is always the heaviest moment of a lift of that sort, and the men made their dispositions accordingly. Short poles were first got under the bent, by thrusting the unarmed ends into the cavity of the foundation; and a few of the stoutest of the men stood on blocks, prepared to apply their strength directly.

"Are you ready, men?" called out the boss. "This is our heaviest bent, and we come to it fresh. Look out well to the foot of each post—Chainbearer, I count on you—your post is the king-post of the whole frame; if that goes, all goes. Make ready, men; heave all together—that's a lift. Heave again, men—he-e-a-ve—all together now—he-e-a-ve! Up she goes; he-e-a-ve—more pike-poles—stand to the frame, boys—get along some studs—he-e-a-ve—in with your props—so, catch a little breath, men."

It was time to take breath, of a certainty; for the effort had been tremendously severe. The bent had risen, however, and now stood, supported as before by props, at an angle of some fifteen degrees with the plane of the building, which carried all but the posts beyond the reach of hands. The pike-pole was to do the rest; and the next ten degrees to be overcome would probably cause the greatest expenditure of force. As yet, all had gone well, the only drawback being the certainty which had been obtained, that the

strength present was hardly sufficient to get up so heavy a bent. Nevertheless, there was no remedy, every person on the ground who could be of use, but myself, having his station. A well-looking, semi-genteel young man, whose dress was two thirds forest and one third town, had come from behind the row of females, stepped upon the frame, and taken his post at a pike-pole. The uninitiated reader will understand that those who raise a building necessarily stand directly under the timber they are lifting; and that a downfall would bring them beneath a fearful trap. Bents do sometimes come down on the laborers; and the result is almost certain destruction to those who are caught beneath the timber. Notwithstanding the danger and the difficulty in the present case, good-humor prevailed, and a few jokes were let off at the expense of the Congregationalists and the late moderator.

"Agree, 'squire," called out the hearty old Rhode Islander, "to let in some of the other denominations occasionally, and see how the bent will go up. Presbytery is holding back desperately!"

"I hope no one supposes," answered Mr. Moderator, "that religious liberty does n't exist in this settlement. Sartainly—sartainly—other denominations can always use this house, when it is n't wanted by the right owners."

Those words "right owners" were unfortunate; the stronger the right, the less the losing party liking to hear of it. Notwithstanding, there was no disposition to skulk, or to abandon the work; and two or three of the dissentients took their revenge on the spot, by hits at the moderator. Fearful that there might be too much talk, the boss now renewed his call for attention to the work.

"Let us all go together, men," he added. "We 've got to the pinch, and must stand to the work like well-broke cattle. If every man at the frame will do his best for just one minute, the hardest will be over. You see that upright stud there, with that boy, Tim Trimmer at it; just raise the bent so that Timmy can get the eend of that stud under it, and all will be safe. Look to the lower eend of that stud, Tim; is it firm and well stopped?"

Tim declared it was; but two or three of the men went and examined it, and after making a few alterations, they too assured the boss it could not get away. A short speech was then made, in which every man was exhorted to do his best; and everybody in particular was reminded of the necessity of standing to his work. After that speech, the men raised the pike-poles, and placed themselves at their stations. Silent expectation succeeded.

As yet, not a sign, look, or word had intimated either wish or expectation that I was to place myself in the ranks. I will confess to an impulse to that effect; for who can look on and see their fellow-creatures straining every muscle, and not submit to human sympathy? But the recollection of military rank, and private position, had not only their claims, but their feelings. I did go a step or two nearer to the frame, but I did not put my foot on it.

"Get ready, men," called the boss, "for a last time. All together at the word—now 's your time—he-e-a-ve—he-e-e-a-ve—he-e-e-e-ave!"

The poor fellows did heave, and it was only too evident that they were staggering under the enormous pressure of the massive timber. I stepped on the frame at the very centre, or at the most dangerous spot, and applied all my strength to a pike-pole.

"Hurrah!" shouted the boss, "there comes the young landlord!—he-e-ave, every man his best!—he-e-e-ave!"

We did heave our best, and we raised the bent several feet above its former props, but not near enough to reach the new ones, by an inch or two. Twenty voices now called on every man to stand to his work; for everybody felt the importance of even a boy's strength. The boss rushed forward like a man, to our aid; and then Tim, fancying his stud would stand without his support, left it and flew to a pike-pole. At this mistake the stud fell a little on one side, where it could be of no use. My face was so placed that I saw this dangerous circumstance; and I felt that the weight I upheld, individually, grew more like lead at each instant. I knew by this time that our force was tottering under the downward pressure of the enormous bent.

"He-e-e-ave, men—for your lives, he-e-ave!" exclaimed the boss, like one in the agony.

The tones of his voice sounded to me like those of despair. Had a single boy deserted us then, and we had twenty of them on the frame, the whole mass of timber must have come down upon us. Talk of charging into a battery! What is there in that to try men's nerves, like the situation in which we were placed? The yielding of a muscle, in all that straining, lifting body, might have ruined us. A most fearful, frightful twenty seconds followed; and just as I had abandoned hope, a young female darted out of the anxious, pale-faced crowd that was looking on in a terror and agony that may be better conceived than described, and seizing the stud, she placed it alongside of the post. But an inch was wanted to gain its support; but how to obtain that inch? I now raised my voice, and called on the fainting men to heave. They obeyed; and I saw that spirited, true-eyed, firm-handed girl place the prop precisely where it was wanted. All that end of the bent felt the relief instantly, and man after man cautiously withdrew from under the frame, until none remained but those who upheld the other side. We flew to the relief of those, and soon had a number of props in their places, when all drew back and looked on the danger from which they had escaped, breathless and silent. For myself, I felt a deep sense of gratitude to God for the escape.

This occurrence made a profound impression. Everybody was sensible of the risk that had been run, and of the ruin that might have befallen the settlement. I had caught a glimpse of the rare creature whose decision, intelligence, and presence of mind had done so much for us all; and to me she seemed to be the loveliest being of her sex my eyes had ever lighted on! Her form, in particular, was perfection; being just the medium between feminine delicacy and rude health; or just so much of the last as could exist without a shade of coarseness; and the little I saw of a countenance that was nearly concealed by a maze of curls that might well be termed golden, appeared to me to correspond admirably with that form. Nor was there anything

masculine or unseemly in the deed she had performed, to subtract in any manner from the feminine character of her appearance. It was decided, useful, and in one sense benevolent; but a boy might have executed it so far as physical force was concerned. The act required coolness, intelligence, and courage, rather than any musculine power of body.

It is possible that, aware as I was of the jeopardy in which we were all placed, my imagination may have heightened the effect of the fair apparition that had come to save us, as it might be, like a messenger from above. But even there, where I stood panting from the effect of exertions that I have never equalled in my own case most certainly, exhausted, nearly breathless, and almost unable to stand, my mind's eye saw nothing but the flexible form, the elastic, ready step, the golden tresses, the cheek suffused by excitement, the charming lips compressed with resolution, and the whole air, attitude, and action, characterized, as was each and all, by the devotion, readiness, and loveliness of her sex. When my pulses beat more regularly, and my heart ceased to throb, I looked around in quest of that strange vision, but saw no one who could, in the least, claim to be connected with it. The females had huddled together, like a covey that was frightened, and were exclaiming, holding up their hands, and indulging in the signs of alarm that are customary with their sex and class. The "vision" was certainly not in that group, but had vanished, as suddenly as it had appeared.

At this juncture, the Chainbearer came forward, and took the command. I could see he was agitated—affected might be a better word—but he was, nevertheless, steady and authoritative. He was obeyed, too, in a manner I was delighted to see. The orders of the "boss" had produced no such impressions as those which old Andries now issued; and I really felt an impulse to obey them myself, as I would have done eighteen months before, when he stood on the right of our regiment as its oldest captain.

The carpenter yielded his command to the Chainbearer without a murmur. Even 'Squire Newcome evidently felt that Andries was one who, in a certain way, could influence the minds of the settlers more than he could do it himself.

In short, everybody listened, everbody seemed pleased, and everbody obeyed. Nor did my old friend resort to any of the coaxing that is so common in America, when men are to be controlled in the country. In the towns, and wherever men are to be commanded in bodies, authority is as well understood as it is in any other quarter of the world; but, in the interior, and especially among the people of New England habits, very few men carry sufficient command with them to say, "John, do this," or "John, do that"; but it is "Johnny, why won't you do this?" or "Johnny, don't you think you'd better do that?" The Chainbearer had none of this mystified nonsense about him. He called things by their right names; and when he wanted a spade, he did not ask for a hoe. As a consequence, he was obeyed, command being just as indispensable to men, on a thousand occasions, as any other quality.

Everything was soon ready again, with the men stationed a little differently from what they had previously been. This change was the Chainbearer's, who understood mechanics practically; better, perhaps, than if he had been a first-rate mathematician. The word was given to heave, all of us being at the pike-pole; when up went the bent, as if borne upon by a force that was irresistible. Such was the effect of old Andries' habits of command, which not only caused every man to lift with all his might, but the whole to lift together. A bent that is perpendicular is easily secured; and then it was announced that the heaviest of the work was over. The other bents were much lighter; and one up, there were means of aiding in raising the rest, that were at first wanting.

"The Congregationals has got the best on 't," cried out the old Rhode Islander, laughing, as soon as the bent was stay-lathed, "by the help of the Chainbearer and somebody else I won't name! Well, our time will come, some day; for Ravensnest is a place in which the people won't be satisfied with one religion. A country is badly on 't, that has but one religion in 't, priests getting lazy, and professors dull!"

"You may be sure of t'at," answered the Chainbearer, who was evidently making preparations to quit the frame.

"Ravensnest will get as many religions, in time, as t'ere are discontented spirits in it; and t'ey will need many raisings, and more priests."

"Do you intend to leave us, Chainbearer? There 's more posts to hold, and more bents to lift."

"The worst is over, and you 've force enough wit'out me, for what remains to be tone. I haf t'e lantlort to take care of. Go to your work, men; and, if you can, rememper you haf a peing to worship in t'is house, t'at is neit'er Congregational, nor Presbyterian, nor anything else of the nature of your disputes and self-conceit. 'Squire Newcome wilt gif you a leat in t'e way of l'arning, and t'e carpenter can act boss well enough for t'e rest of t'e tay."

I was surprised at the coolness with which my old friend delivered himself of sentiments that were not very likely to find favor in such a company, and the deference that he received, while thus ungraciously employed. But I afterward ascertained Andries commanded respect by means of his known integrity; and his opinions carried weight because he was a man who usually said, "Come, boys," and not one who issued his orders in the words, "Go, boys." This had been his character in the army, where, in his own little circle, he was known as one ever ready to lead in person. Then Andries was a man of sterling truth; and such a man when he has the moral courage to act up to his native impulses, mingled with discretion enough to keep him within the boundaries of common prudence, insensibly acquires great influence over those with whom he is brought in contact. Men never fail to respect such qualities, however little they put them in practice in their own cases.

"Come, Morty, my poy," said the Chainbearer, as soon as we were clear of the crowd, "I will pe your guite, ant take you to a roof unter which you will pe master."

"You surely do not mean the 'Nest?"

"T'at, and no ot'er. T'e ole place looks, like us olt soltiers, a little rusty, and t'e worse for sarvice; put it is comfortaple, and I haf had it put in order for you, poy. Your grandfat'er's furniture is still t'ere; and Frank Malpone, Dus, and I haf mate it head-quarters, since we half peen in

t'is part of t'e country. You know I haf your orters for t'at."

"Certainly, and to use anything else that is mine. But I had supposed you fairly hutted in the woods of Mooseridge!"

"T'at hast peen tone, too; sometimes we are at one place, and sometimes at anot'er. My niggers are at t'e hut; put Frank, and Dus, and I haf come ofer to welcome you to t'e country."

"I have a wagoner here, and my own black—let me step to the inn, and order them to get ready for us."

"Mortaunt, you and I haf peen uset to our feet. The soltier marches, and countermarches, wit' no wagon to carry him; he leafs t'em to t'e paggage, and t'e paggage-guart."

"Come on, old Andries; I will be your comrade, on foot or on horseback. It can only be some three or four miles, and Jaap can follow with the trunks at his leisure."

A word spoken to the negro was all that was necessary; though the meeting between him and the Chainbearer was that of old friends. Jaap had gone through the whole war with the regiment, sometimes acting as my father's servant, sometimes carrying a musket, sometimes driving a team; and, at the close of his career, as my particular attendant. He consequently regarded himself as a sort of soldier, and a very good one had he proved himself to be, on a great many occasions.

"One word before we start, Chainbearer," I said, as old Andries and Jaap concluded their greetings; "I fell in with the Indian you used to call Sureflint, in the woods, and I wish to take him with us."

"He hast gone aheat, to let your visit pe known," answered my friend. "I saw him going up t'e roat, at a quick trot, half an hour since. He is at t'e 'Nest py t'is time."

No more remained to be said or done, and we went our way, leaving the people busily engaged in getting up the remainder of the frame. I had occasion to observe that my arrival produced much less sensation in the settlement

than it might have done, had not the "meeting-house" been my competitor in attracting attention. One was just as much of a novelty as the other; just as much of a stranger. Although born in a Christian land, and educated in Christian dogmas, very few of those who dwelt on the estate of Ravensnest, and who were under the age of five-and-twenty, had ever seen an edifice that was constructed for the purpose of Christian worship at all. Such structures were rare indeed, in the year 1784, and in the interior of New York. Albany had but two, I believe; the capital may have had a dozen; and most of the larger villages possessed at least one; but with the exception of the old counties, and here and there one on the Mohawk, the new State could not boast of many of "those silent fingers pointing to the sky," rising among its trees, so many monitors of a future world, and of the great end of life. As a matter of course, all those who had never seen a church felt the liveliest desire to judge of the form and proportions of this; and as the Chainbearer and I passed the crowd of females, I heard several good-looking girls expressing their impatience to see something of the anticipated steeple, while scarce a glance was bestowed on myself.

"Well, my old friend, here we are together, again, marching on a public highway," I remarked, "but with no intention of encamping in front of an enemy."

"I hope not," returned Andries, dryly; "t'ough all is not golt t'at glitters. We have fought a hart battle, Major Littlepage; I hope it will turn out for a goot end."

I was a little surprised at this remark; but Andries was never very sanguine in his anticipations of good. Like a true Dutchman, he particularly distrusted the immigration from the Eastern States, which I had heard him often say could bring no happy results.

"All will come round in the end, Chainbearer," I answered, "and we shall get the benefits of our toil and dangers. But how do you come on at the 'Ridge, and who is this surveyor of yours?"

"T'ings do well enough at t'e 'Ridge, Mortaunt; for t'ere, t'ere is not a soul yet to make trouple. We have prought

you a map of ten t'ousant acres, laid off in huntret acre lots, which I will venture to say haf peen as honestly and carefully measuret as any other ten t'ousant acres in t'e State. We pegan next to t'is property, and you may pegin to lease, on your fat'er's lant, just as soon as you please."

"And the Frank Malbone you have written about, did the surveying?"

"He worket up my measurements, lat, and closely tone t'ey are, I'll answer for it. T'is Frank Malbone is t'e brot'er of Dus—t'at is to say, her half-brot'er; peing no nephew of mine. Dus, you know, is only a half-niece in bloot; but she is a full da'ter in lofe. As for Frank, he is a goot fellow; and t'ough t'is is his first jop at surfeying, he may be dependet on wit' as much confitence as any ot'er man going."

"No matter if a few mistakes are made, Andries; land is not diamonds in this country; there is plenty for us all, and a great deal to spare. It would be a different matter if there was a scarcity; but as it is, give good measure to the tenant or the purchaser. A first survey can only produce a little loss or gain; whereas surveys between old farms are full of trouble."

"Ant lawsuits," put in the Chainbearer, nodding his head. "To tell you my mint, Mortaunt, I would rat'er take a jop in a Dutch settlement, at half-price, t'an run a line petween two Yankees for twice the money. Among t'e Dutch, t'e owners light their pipes, and smoke whilst you are at work; but the Yankees are the whole time trying to cut off a little here, and to gain a little t'ere: so t'at it is as much as a man's conscience is wort' to carry a chain fairly petween 'em."

As I knew his prejudice on this subject formed the weak point in the Chainbearer, I gave the discourse a new turn, by leading it to political events, of which I knew him to be fond. We walked on, conversing on various topics connected with this theme, for near an hour, when I found myself rather suddenly quite near to my own particular house. Near by, the building had more of shape and substance than it had seemed to possess when seen from the height; and I

found the orchards and meadows around it free from stumps and other eye-sores, and in good order. Still, the place on its exterior had a sort of jail look, there being no windows, nor any other outlet than the door. On reaching the latter, which was a gate, rather than an ordinary entrance, we paused a moment to look about us. While we stood there, gazing at the fields, a form glided through the opening, and Sureflint stood by my side. He had hardly got there, when there arose the strains of the same full, rich, female voice, singing Indian words to a civilized melody, as I had heard issuing from the thicket of pines, among the second growth of the forest. From that moment I forgot my fields and orchards, forgot the Chainbearer and Sureflint, and could think of nothing but the extraordinary circumstance of a native girl's possessing such a knowledge of our music. The Indian himself seemed entranced; never moving until the song or verses were ended. Old Andries smiled, waited until the last strain was finished, pronounced the word "Dus" with emphasis, and beckoned for me to follow him into the building.

CHAPTER XI.

"The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time; if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything, and so dance out the answer."

Much Ado About Nothing.

"DUS!" I repeated to myself. "This, then, is Dus, and no Indian girl; the Chainbearer's 'Dus'; Priscilla Bayard's 'Dus'; and Sureflint's 'wren'!"

Andries must have overheard me, in part; for he stopped just within the court on which the gate opened, and said,—

"Yes, t'at is Dus, my niece. The girl is like a mocking-pird, and catches the songs of all languages and people. She is goot at Dutch, and quite melts my heart, Mortaunt, when she opens her throat to sing one of our melancholy Dutch songs; and she gives the English too, as if she knowet no ot'er tongue."

"But that song was Indian—the words, at least, were Mohawk or Oneida."

"Onondago—t'ere is little or no difierence. Yes, you 're right enough; the worts are Indian, and they tell me t'e music is Scotch. Come from where it will, it goes straight to the heart, poy."

"How came Dus—how came Miss Ursula—that is, your niece, to understand an Indian dialect?"

"Did n't I tell you she is a perfect mocking-pird, and that she imitates all she hears? Yes, Dus would make as goot a surveyor as her brot'er, after a week's trial. You 've heart me say how much I livet among the tripes before t'e war, and Dus was t'en wit' me. In that manner she has caught

the language ; and what she has once l'arnet she nefer forget. Dus is half wilt from living so much in the woots, and you must make allowances for her ; put she is a capital gal, and t'e very prite of my heart ! "

" Tell me one thing before we enter the house ; does any one else sing Indian about here ?—has Sureflint any women with him ? "

" Not he ! t'e creatur' hast not'ing to do wit' squaws. As for any one else's singing Indian, I can only tell you I never heart of such a person."

" But you told me you were down the road to meet me this morning—were you alone ? "

" Not at all—we all went ; Sureflint, Frank, Dus, and I. I t'ought it due to a lantlort, Mortaunt, to gif him a hearty welcome ; t'ough Dus did mutiny a little, and sait t'at, lantlort or no lantlort, it was not proper for a young gal to go forth to meet a young man. I might have t'ought so too, if it had n't peen yourself, my poy ; but, with you, I could n't play stranger, as one woult wit' a straggling Yankee. I wishet to welcome you wit' the whole family ; but I 'll not conceal Dus's unwillingness to be of t'e party."

" But Dus was of your party ! It is very odd we did not meet ! "

" Now you speak of it, I do pelief it wast all owin' to a scheme of t'at cunnin' gal ! You must know, Mortaunt, a'ter we had got a pit down t'e roat, she persuatet us to enter a t'icket of pines, in order to eat a mout'ful ; and I do pelief the cunnin' hussy just did it t'at you might slip past, and she safe her female dignity ! "

" And from those pines Sureflint came, just after Dus, as you call her, but Miss Ursula Malbone as I ought to style her, had been singing this very song ? "

" Wast you near enough to know all t'is, poy, and we miss you ! The gal dit sing t'at fery song ; yes, I remember it ; and a sweet, goot song it is. Call her Miss Ursula Malbone ? Why should n't you call her Dus, as well as Frank and I ? "

" For the simple reason that you are her uncle, and Frank her brother, while I am a total stranger."

"Poh—poh—Morty; t'is is peing partic'lar. I am only a half-uncle, in the first place; and Frank is only a half-brot'er; and I dares to say you wilt pe her whole frient. T'en, you are not a stranger to any of t'e family, I can tell you, lat; for I haf talket enough apout you to make bot' t'e poy and t'e gal lofe you almost as much as I do myself."

Poor, simple-hearted, upright old Andries! What an unpleasant feeling did he give me, by letting me into the secret that I was about to meet persons who had been listening to his partial accounts for the last twelve months. It is so difficult to equal expectations thus awakened; and I will own that I had begun to be a little sensitive on the subject of this Dus. The song had been ringing in my ears from the moment I first heard it; and now that it became associated with Priscilla Bayard's Ursula Malbone, the latter had really become a formidable person to my imagination. There was no retreating, however, had I wished it; and a sign induced the Chainbearer to proceed. Face the young woman I must, and the sooner it was done the better.

The 'Nest-house, as my homely residence was termed, had been a sort of fortress, or "garrison," in its day, having been built around three sides of a parallellogram, with all its windows and doors opening on the court. On the fourth side were the remains of pickets, or palisades, but they were mostly rotted away, being useless as a fence, from the circumstance that the buildings stood on the verge of a low cliff that, of itself, formed a complete barrier against the invasions of cattle, and no insignificant defence against those of man.

The interior of the 'Nest-house was far more inviting than its exterior. The windows gave the court an appearance of life and gayety, at once converting that which was otherwise a pile of logs, thrown together in the form of a building, into an habitable and inhabited building. One side of this court, however, was much neater, and had much more the air of comfort than the other; and toward the first Andries led the way. I was aware that my grandfather Mordaunt had caused a few rooms in this building to be fur-

nished for his own particular purposes, and that no orders had ever been given to remove or to dispose of the articles thus provided. I was not surprised, therefore, on entering the house, to find myself in apartments which, while they could not be called in any manner gayly or richly furnished, were nevertheless quite respectably supplied with most of the articles that are thought necessary to a certain manner of living.

"We shall fint Dus in here, I dare say," observed the Chainbearer, throwing open a door, and signing for me to precede him. "Go in, and shake t'e gal's hand, Mortaunt; she knows you well enough, name and natur', as a poty may say."

I did go in, and found myself within a few feet of the fair, golden-haired girl of the raising; she who had saved the frame from falling on us all, by a decision of mind and readiness of exertion that partook equally of courage and dexterity. She was in the same dress as when first seen by me, though the difference in attitude and employment certainly gave her air and expression a very different character. Ursula Malbone was now quietly occupied in hemming one of those coarse checked handkerchiefs that the poverty of her uncle compelled him, or at least induced him to use, and of which I had seen one in his hands only a minute before. On my entrance she rose, gravely but not discourteously answering my bow with a profound courtesy. Neither spoke, though the salutes were exchanged as between persons who felt no necessity for an introduction in order to know each other.

"Well, now," put in Andries, in his strongest Dutch accent, "t'is wilt never do, ast petween two such olt frients. Come hit'er, Dus, gal, and gif your hant to Mortaunt Littlepage, who ist a sort of son of my own."

Dus obeyed, and I had the pleasure of holding the soft, velvet-like hand in mine for one moment. I felt a gratification I cannot describe in finding the hand was so soft, since the fact gave me the assurance that necessity had not yet reduced her to any of the toil that is unsuited to a gentlewoman. I knew that Andries had slaves, his only possession, indeed,

besides his compass, chains, and sword, unless a few arms and some rude articles of the household were excepted; and these slaves, old and worn out as they must be by this time, were probably the means of saving the niece from the performance of offices that were menial.

Although I got the hand of Ursula Malbone, I could not catch her eye. She did not avert her face, neither did she affect coldness; but she was not at her ease. I could readily perceive that she would have been better pleased had her uncle permitted the salutations to be limited to the bows and courtesies. As I had never seen this girl before, and could not have done anything to offend her, I ascribed the whole to *mauvaise honte*, and the embarrassment that was natural enough to one who found herself placed in a situation so different from that in which she had so lately been. I bowed on the hand, possibly gave it a gentle pressure in order to reassure its owner, and we separated.

"Well, now, Dus, haf you a cup of tea for the landlort—to welcome him to his own house wit'?" demanded Andries, perfectly satisfied with the seemingly amicable relations he had established between us. "T'e major hast hat a long march, for peaceable times, and woult be glat to get a little refreshment."

"You call me major, Chainbearer, while you refuse to accept the same title for yourself."

"Ay, t'ere ist reason enough for t'at. You may lif to be a general; wilt probably be one before you 're t'irty; but I am an olt man, now, and shall never wear any ot'er uniform than this I have on again. I pegan t'e worlt in this corps, Morty, and shall end it in the rank in which I began."

"I thought you had been a surveyor originally, and that you fell back on the chain because you had no taste for figures. I think I have heard as much from yourself."

"Yes, t'at is t'e fact. Figures and I did n't agree; nor do I like 'em any petter at seventy t'an I liket 'em at seventeen. Frank Malbone, now, Dus's brother, t'ere, ist a lat that takes to 'em nat'rally, and he works t'rough a sum

ast your fat'er would carry a battalion t'rough a ravine. Carrying chain I like; it gives sufficient occupation to t'e mind; put honesty is the great quality for the chainbearer. They say figures can't lie, Mortaunt; but 't is not true wit' chains; sometimes they do lie, desperately."

"Where is Mr. Francis Malbone? I should be pleased to make his acquaintance."

"Frank remainet pehint to help 'em up with their timber. He is a stout chap, like yourself, and can lent a hant; while, poor fellow! he has no lantlort-tignity to maintain."

I heard a gentle sigh from Dus, and involuntarily turned my head; for she was occupied directly behind my chair. As if ashamed of the weakness, the spirited girl colored, and for the first time in my life I heard her voice, the two instances of the Indian songs excepted. I say heard her voice; for it was an event to record. A pleasant voice, in either sex, is a most pleasant gift from nature. But the sweet tones of Ursula Malbone were all that the most fastidious ear could have desired; being full, rich, melodious, yet on the precise key that best satisfies the taste, bringing with it assurances of a feminine disposition and regulated habits. I detest a shrill, high-keyed female voice, more than that of a bawling man, while one feels a contempt for those who mumble their words in order to appear to possess a refinement that the very act itself contradicts. Plain, direct, but regulated utterance is indispensable to a man or woman of the world; anything else rendering him or her mean or affected.

"I was in hopes," said Dus, "that evil-disposed frame was up and secured, and that I should see Frank in a minute or two. I was surprised to see you working so stoutly for the Presbyterians, uncle Chainbearer!"

"I might return t'e compliment, and say I wast surpriset to see you doing the same t'ing, Miss Dus! Besides, the tenomination is Congregational, and not Presbyterian; and one is apout as much to your taste as t'e ot'er."

"The little I did was for you and Frank, and—Mr. Littlepage, with all the rest who stood under the frame."

"I am sure, Miss Ursula," I now put in, "we all ought,

and I trust we all do feel truly grateful for your timely aid. Had that timber come down, many of us must have been killed, and more maimed."

"It was not a feminine exploit," answered the girl, smiling, as I thought, a little bitterly. "But one gets accustomed to being useful in the woods."

"Do you dislike living in the forest, then?" I ventured to ask.

"Certainly not. I like living anywhere that keeps me near uncle Chainbearer and Frank. They are all to me, now my excellent protectress and adviser is no more; and their home is my home, their pleasure my pleasure, their happiness mine."

This might have been said in a way to render it suspicious and sentimental; but it was not. On the contrary, it was impulsive, and came from the heart. I saw by the gratified look of Andries that he understood his niece, and was fully aware how much he might rely on the truthful character of the speaker. As for the girl herself, the moment she had given utterance to what she felt, she shrunk back, like one abashed at having laid bare feelings that ought to have been kept in the privacy of her own bosom. Unwilling to distress her, I turned the conversation in a way to leave her to herself.

"Mr. Newcome seems a skilful manager of the multitude," I remarked. "He contrived very dexterously to give to the twenty-six Congregationalists he had with him, the air of being a majority of the whole assembly; while in truth, they were barely a third of those present."

"Let Jason Newcome alone for t'at!" exclaimed Andries. "He understants mankint, he says, and sartainly he hast a way of marching and countermarching just where he pleases wit' t'ese people, makin' 'em t'ink t'e whole time t'ey are doing just what t'ey want to do. It ist an art, major—it ist an art!"

"I should think it must be, and one worth possessing; if, indeed, it can be exercised with credit."

"Ay, t'ere's the rub! Exerciset it is; but as for t'e credit, t'at I will not answer for. It sometimes makes me

angry, and sometimes it makes me laugh, when I look on, and see t'e manner in which Jason makes t'e people rule t'emselves, and how he wheels 'em apout, and faces 'em, and t'rows them into line, and out of line, at t'eir own wort of commant! His Excellency coult hartly do more wit' us, a'ter t'e baron[1] had given us his drill."

"There must be some talent necessary, in order to possess so much influence over one's fellow-creatures."

"It is a talent you woult be ashamed to exercise, Mortaunt Littlepage, t'ough you hat it in cart-loats. No man can use such talent wit'out peginning wit' lying and deceifing; and you must be greatly changet, major, if you are the he't of your class, in such a school."

"I am sorry to see, Chainbearer, that you have no better opinion of my agent; I must look into the matter a little, when this is the case."

"You wilt fint him law-honest enough; for he swears py t'e law, and lifs py t'e law. No fear for your tollars, poy; t'ey pe all safe, unless, inteet, t'ey haf all vanishet in t'e law."

As Andries was getting more and more Dutch, I knew he was growing more and more warm, and I thought it might be well to defer the necessary inquiries to a cooler moment. This peculiarity I have often observed in most of those who speak English imperfectly, or with the accent of some other tongue. They fall back, as respects language, to that nearest to nature, at those moments when natural feeling is asserting its power over them the least equivocally.

I now began to question the Chainbearer concerning the condition in which he found the 'Nest-house and farm, over which I had given him full authority, when he came to the place, by a special letter to the agent. The people in possession were of very humble pretensions, and had been content to occupy the kitchen and servants' rooms ever since my grandfather's death, as indeed they had done long before that event. It was owing to this moderation, as well

[1] This allusion is evidently to a German officer, who introduced the Prussian drill into the American army, Baron Steuben—or *Stuy*ben, as I think he must have been called in Germany—Steu*ben*, as he is universally termed in this country.—EDITOR.

as to their perfect honesty, that I found nothing embezzled, and most of the articles in good condition. As for the farm, it had flourished, on the "let alone" principle. The orchards had grown, as a matter of course; and if the fields had not been improved by judicious culture, neither had they been exhausted by covetous croppings. In these particulars, there was nothing of which to complain. Things might have been better, Andries thought; but he also thought it was exceedingly fortunate they were no worse. While we were conversing on this theme, Dus moved about the room silently, but with collected activity, having arranged the tea-table with her own hands. When invited to take our seats at it—everybody drew near to a tea-table in that day, unless when there was too large a party to be accommodated—I was surprised to find everything so perfectly neat, and some things rich. The plates, knives, etc., were of good quality, but the tray was actually garnished with a set of old-fashioned silver, such as was made when tea was first used, of small size, but very highly chased. The handle of the spoons represeuted the stem of the tea-plant, and there was a crest on each of them; while a full coat of arms was engraved on the different vessels of the service, which were four in all. I looked at the crest, in a vague but surprised expectation of finding my own. It was entirely new to me. Taking the cream-jug in my hand, I could recall no arms resembling those that were engraved on it.

"I was surprised to find this plate here," I observed; "for though my grandfather possessed a great deal of it, for one of his means, I did not think he had enough to be as prodigal of it as leaving it here would infer. This is family plate, too, but those arms are neither Mordaunt nor Littlepage. May I ask to whom they do belong?"

"The Malpones," answered the Chainbearer. "T'e t'ings are t'e property of Dus."

"And you may add, uncle Chainbearer, that they are all her property," added the girl, quickly.

"I feel much honored in being permitted to use them, Miss Ursula," I remarked; "for a very pretty set they make."

"Necessity and not vanity has brought them out to-day. I broke the only teapot of yours there was in the house this morning, and was in hopes Frank would have brought up one from the store to supply its place, before it would be wanted; but he does not come. As for spoons, I can find none belonging to the house, and we use these constantly. As the teapot was indispensable, I thought I might as well display all my wealth at once. But this is the first time the things have been used in many, many years!"

There was a plaintive melody in Dus's voice, spite of her desire and effort to speak with unconcern, that I found exceedingly touching. While few of us enter into the exultation of successful vulgarity, as it rejoices in its too often random prosperity, it is in nature to sympathize with a downward progress, and with the sentiments it leaves, when it is connected with the fates of the innocent, the virtuous, and the educated. That set of silver was all that remained to Ursula Malbone of a physical character, and which marked the former condition of her family; and doubtless she cherished it with no low feeling of morbid pride, but as a melancholy monument of a condition to which all her opinions, tastes, and early habits constantly reminded her she properly belonged. In this last point of view, the sentiment was as respectable, and as much entitled to reverence, as in the other case it would have been unworthy, and meriting contempt.

There is a great deal of low misconception, as well as a good deal of cant, beginning to prevail among us, on the subject of the qualities that mark a gentleman or a lady. The day has gone by, and I trust forever, when the mere accidents of birth are to govern such a claim; though the accidents of birth are very apt to supply the qualities that may really form the caste. For my own part, I believe in the exaggerations of neither of the two extremes that so stubbornly maintain their theories on this subject; or, that a gentleman may not be formed exclusively by birth on the one hand, and that the severe morality of the Bible on the other is by no means indispensable to the character. A man may be a very perfect gentleman, though by no means

a perfect man, or a Christian; and he may be a very good Christian, and very little of a gentleman. It is true, there is a connection in manners, as a result, between the Christian and the gentleman; but it is in the result, and not in the motive. That Christianity has little necessary connection with the character of a gentleman may be seen in the fact that the dogmas of the first teach us to turn another cheek to him who smites; while the promptings of the gentleman are—not to wipe out the indignity in the blood of the offender, but—to show that rather than submit to it, he is ready to risk his own life.[1]

But, I repeat, there is no necessary connection between the Christian and the gentleman, though the last who is the first attains the highest condition of humanity. Christians, under the influence of their educations and habits, often do things that the code of the gentleman rejects; while it is certain that gentlemen constantly commit unequivocal sins. The morality of the gentleman repudiates meannesses and low vices, rather than it rigidly respects the laws of God; while the morality of the Christian is unavoidably raised or depressed by the influence of the received opinions of his social caste. I am not maintaining that "the ten commandments were not given for the obedience of people of quality," for their obligations are universal; but simply that the qualities of a gentleman are the best qualities of man unaided by God, while the graces of the Christian come directly from his mercy.

Nevertheless, there is that in the true character of a

[1] Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage would seem to have got hold of the only plausible palliative for a custom that originated in those times when abuses could only be corrected by the strong arm; and which, in our own days, is degenerating into the merest system of chicanery and trick. The duellist who, in his "practice," gets to be "certain death to a shingle," and then misses his man, instead of illustrating his chivalry, merely lets the world into the secret that his nerves are not equal to his drill! There was something, as respectable as anything *can* be in connection with a custom so silly, in the conduct of the Englishman who called out to his adversary, a near-sighted man, "that if he wished to shoot at him, he must turn his pistol in another direction."—EDITOR.

gentleman that is very much to be respected. In addition to the great indispensables of tastes, manners, and opinions, based on intelligence and cultivation, and all those liberal qualities that mark his caste, he cannot and does not stoop to meannesses of any sort. He is truthful out of self-respect, and not in obedience to the will of God; free with his money, because liberality is an essential feature of his habits, and not in imitation of the self-sacrifice of Christ; superior to scandal and the vices of the busybody, inasmuch as they are low and impair his pride of character, rather than because he has been commanded not to bear false witness against his neighbor. It is a great mistake to confound these two characters, one of which is a mere human embellishment of the ways of a wicked world, while the other draws near to the great end of human existence. The last is a character I revere; while I am willing to confess that I never meet with the first without feeling how vacant and repulsive society would become without it; unless, indeed, the vacuum could be filled by the great substance of which, after all, the gentleman is but the shadow.

Ursula Malbone lost nothing in my respect by betraying the emotion she did, while thus speaking of this relic of old family plate. I was glad to find, however, that she could retain it; for, though dressed in no degree in a style unbecoming her homely position as her uncle's housekeeper, there were a neatness and taste in her attire that are not often seen in remote parts of this country. On this subject, the reader will indulge my weakness a little, if I pause to say a word. Ursula had neither preserved in her dress the style of one of her sex and condition of the world, nor yet entirely adopted that common to girls of the class to which she now seemingly belonged. It struck me that some of those former garments that were the simplest in fashion, and the most appropriate in material, had been especially arranged for present use; and sweetly becoming were they, to one of her style of countenance and perfection of form. In that day, as every one knows, the different classes of society —and, kingdom or republic, classes do and ever will exist

in this country, as an incident of civilization ; a truth every one can see as respects those below, though his vision may be less perfect as respects those above him—but every one knows that great distinctions in dress existed, as between classes, all over the Christian world, at the close of the American war, that are fast disappearing, or have altogether disappeared. Now, Ursula had preserved just enough of the peculiar attire of her own class, to let one understand that she, in truth, belonged to it, without rendering the distinction obtrusive. Indeed, the very character of that which she did preserve sufficiently told the story of her origin, since it was a subdued, rather than an exaggerated, imitation of that to which she had been accustomed, as would have been the case with a mere copyist. I can only add, that the effect was to render her sufficiently charming.

"Taste t'ese cakes," said old Andries, who, without the slightest design, did love to exhibit the various merits of his niece. "Dus mate t'em, and I'll engage Matam Washington herself could n't make pleasanter!"

"If Mrs. Washington was ever thus employed," I answered, "she might turn pale with envy here. Better cakes of the sort I never ate."

"Of the sort is well added, Mr. Littlepage," the girl quietly observed ; "my protectress and friend made me rather skilful in this way, but the ingredients are not to be had here as they were in her family."

"Which, being a boarding-school for young ladies, was doubtless better supplied than common with the materials and knowledge necessary for good cakes."

Dus laughed, and it startled me, so full of a wild but subdued melody did that laugh seem to be.

"Young ladies have many foibles imputed to them, of which they are altogether innocent," was her answer. "Cakes were almost forbidden fruit in the school, and we were taught to make them in pity to the palates of the men."

"Your future huspants, gal," cried the Chainbearer, rising to quit the room.

"Our fathers, brothers, and uncles," returned his niece, laying an emphasis on the last word.

"I believe, Miss Ursula," I resumed, as soon as Andries had left us alone, "that I have been let behind the curtain as respects your late school, having an acquaintance of a somewhat particular nature, with one of your old schoolfellows."

My companion did not answer, but she fastened those fascinating blue eyes of hers on me, in a way that asked a hundred questions in a moment. I could not but see that they were suffused with tears; allusions to her school often producing that effect.

"I mean Miss Priscilla Bayard, who would seem to be, or to have been, a very good friend of yours," I added, observing that my companion was not disposed to say anything.

"Pris. Bayard!" Ursula now suffered to escape her, in her surprise; "and she an acquaintance of a somewhat particular nature!"

"My language has been incautious; not to say that of a coxcomb. Certainly, I am not authorized to say more than that our families are very intimate, and that there are some particular reasons for that intimacy. I beg you to read only as I have corrected the error."

"I do not see that the correction changes things much; and you will let me say I am grieved, sadly grieved, to learn so much."

This was odd! That Dus really meant what she said was plain enough by a face that had actually lost nearly all of its color, and which expressed an emotion that was most extraordinary. Shall I own what a miserably conceited coxcomb I was for a single moment? The truth must be said, and I will confess it. The thought that crossed my mind was this: Ursula Malbone was pained at the idea that the only man whom she had seen for a year, and who could, by possibility, make any impression on one of her education and tastes, was betrothed to another! Under ordinary circumstances, this precocious preference might have caused me to revolt at its exhibition; but there was far too much of nature in all of Dus's emotions, acts, and language, to produce any other impression on me than that of intense

interest. I have always dated the powerful hold that this girl so soon obtained on my heart, to the tumult of feeling awakened in me at that singular moment. Love at first sight may be ridiculous, but it is sometimes true. That a passion may be aroused by a glance, or a smile, or any other of those secret means of conveying sympathy with which nature has supplied us, I fully believe; though its duration must depend on qualities of a higher and more permanent influence. It is the imagination that is first excited; the heart coming in for its share by later and less perceptible degrees.

My delusion, however, did not last long. Whether Ursula Malbone was conscious of the misconstruction to which she was liable, I cannot say; but I rather think not, as she was much too innocent to dread evil; or whether she saw some other necessity for explaining herself, remains a secret with me to this hour; but explain she did. How judiciously this was done, and with how much of that female tact that taught her to conceal the secrets of her friend, will appear to those who are sufficiently interested in the subject to pursue it.

CHAPTER XII.

> "Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.
> Joy, gentle friends! joy, and fresh days of love
> Accompany your hearts!"
>
> *Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

"I OUGHT not to leave you in any doubts as to my meaning, Mr. Littlepage," resumed Ursula, after a short pause. "Priscilla Bayard is very dear to me, and is well worthy of all your love and admiration—"

"Admiration, if you please, and as much as you please, Miss Ursula; but there is no such feeling as love, as yet, certainly, between Miss Bayard and myself."

The countenance of Dus brightened sensibly. Truth herself, she gave immediate credit to what I said; and I could not but see that she was greatly relieved from some unaccountable apprehension. Still, she smiled a little archly, and perhaps a little sadly, as she continued,—

"'As yet, certainly,' is very equivocal on your side, when a young woman like Priscilla Bayard is concerned. It may at any moment be converted into 'now, certainly,' with that certainty the other way."

"I will not deny it. Miss Bayard is a charming creature—yet, I do not know how it is—there seems to be a fate in these things. The peculiar relation to which I alluded, and alluded so awkwardly, is nothing more than the engagement of my youngest sister to her brother. There is no secret in that engagement, so I shall not affect to conceal it."

"And it is just such an engagement as might lead to one

between yourself and Priscilla!" exclaimed Dus, certainly not without alarm.

"It might, or it might not, as the parties happen to view such things. With certain temperaments it might prove an inducement; while with others it would not."

"My interest in the subject," continued Dus, "proceeds altogether from the knowledge I have that another has sought Miss Bayard; and, I will own, with my hearty good wishes for his success. You struck me as a most formidable rival; nor do you seem any the less so, now I know that your families are to be connected."

"Have no fears on my account, for I am as heart-whole as the first day I saw the lady."

A flash of intelligence—a most meaning flash it was—gleamed on the handsome face of my companion; and it was followed by a mournful, though I still thought not an entirely dissatisfied smile.

"These are matters about which one had better not say much," Dus added, after a pause. "My sex has its 'peculiar rights,' and no woman should disregard them. You have been fortunate in finding all your tenants collected together, Mr. Littlepage, in a way to let you see them at a single glance."

"I was fortunate in one sense, and a most delightful introduction I had to the settlement—such an introduction as I would travel another hundred miles to have repeated."

"Are you, then, so fond of raisings? or do you really love excitement to such a degree as to wish to get under a trap, like one of the poor rabbits my uncle sometimes takes?"

"I am not thinking of the raising, or of the frame, although your courage and presence of mind might well indelibly impress both on my mind,"—Dus looked down, and the color mounted to her temples,—"but I was thinking of a certain song, an Indian song, sung to Scotch music, that I heard a few miles from the clearings, and which was my real introduction to the pleasant things one may both hear and see, in this retired part of the world."

"Which is not so retired, after all, that flattery cannot penetrate it, I find. It is pleasant to hear one's songs ex-

tolled, even though they may be Indian ; but it is not half so pleasant as to hear tidings of Priscilla Bayard. If you wish truly to charm my ear, talk of her ! ''

"The attachment seems mutual, for I can assure you Miss Bayard manifested just the same interest in you."

"In me ! Priscilla then remembers a poor creature like me, in her banishment from the world ! Perhaps she remembers me so much the more, because I am banished. I hope she does not, cannot think I regret my condition—that, I could hardly forgive her."

"I rather think she does not ; I know she gives you credit for more than common excellences."

"It is strange that Priscilla Bayard should speak of me to you ! I have been a little unguarded myself, Mr. Littlepage, and have said so much, that I begin to feel the necessity of saying something more. There is some excuse for my not feeling in your presence as in that of a stranger ; since uncle Chainbearer has your name in his mouth at least one hundred times each day. Twelve different times in one hour did he speak of you yesterday."

"Excellent old Andries ! It is the pride of my life that so honest a man loves me ; and now for the explanation I am entitled to receive as his friend, by your own acknowledgement."

Dus smiled, a little saucily I thought ; but saucily or not, that smile made her look extremely lovely. She reflected a moment, like one who thinks intensely, even bending her head under the painful mental effort ; then she drew her form to its usual attitude, and spoke.

"It is always best to be frank," she said, "and it can do no harm, while it may do good, to be explicit with you. You will not forget, Mr. Littlepage, that I believe myself to be conversing with my uncle's very best friend ?''

" I am too proud of the distinction to forget it, under any circumstances ; and least of all in your presence."

"Well, then, I will be frank. Priscilla Bayard was, for eight years, my associate and closest friend. Our affection for each other commenced when we were mere children, and increased with time and knowledge. About a year before

the close of the war, my brother Frank, who is now here as my uncle's surveyor, found opportunities to quit his regiment, and to come to visit me quite frequently—indeed, his company was sent to Albany, where he could see me as often as he desired. To see me was to see Priscilla; for we were inseparable; and to see Priscilla was, for poor Frank at least, to love her. He made me his confidant, and my alarm was nothing but natural concern lest he might have a rival as formidable as you."

A flood of light was let in upon me by this brief explanation, though I could not but wonder at the simplicity, or strength of character, that induced so strange a confidence. When I got to know Dus better, the whole became clear enough; but, at the moment, I was a little surprised.

"Be at ease on my account, Miss Malbone—"

"Why not call me Dus at once? You will do it in a week, like every one else here; and it is better to begin our acquaintance as I am sure it will end. Uncle Chainbearer calls me Dus; Frank calls me Dus; most of your settlers call me Dus, to my very face; and even our blacks call me Miss Dus. You cannot wish to be singular."

"I will gladly venture so far as to call you Ursula; but Dus does not please me."

"No! I have become so accustomed to be called Dus by all my friends, that it sounds distant to be called by any other name. Do you not think Dus a pretty diminutive?"

"I did not, most certainly; though all these things depend on the associations. Dus Malbone sounded sweetly enough in Priscilla Bayard's mouth; but I fear it will not be so pleasant in mine."

"Do as you please—but do not call me Miss Ursula, or Miss Malbone. It would have displeased me once, not to have been so addressed by any man; but it has an air of mockery, now that I know myself to be only the companion and housekeeper of a poor chainbearer."

"And yet, the owner of that silver, the lady I see seated at this table, in this room, is not so very inappropriately addressed as Miss Ursula!"

"You know the history of the silver, and the table and

room are your own. No, Mr. Littlepage, we are poor—very, very poor; uncle Chainbearer, Frank, and I—all alike, have nothing."

This was not said despairingly, but with a sincerity that I found exceedingly touching.

"Frank, at least, should have something," I answered. "You tell me he was in the army?"

"He was a captain at the last, but what did he receive for that? We do not complain of the country, any of us; neither my uncle, my brother, nor myself; for we know it is poor, like ourselves, and that its poverty, even, is like our own, that of persons reduced. I was long a charge on my friends, and there have been debts to pay. Could I have known it, such a thing should not have happened. Now I can only repay those who have discharged these obligations, by coming into the wilderness with them. It is a terrible thing for a woman to be in debt."

"But you have remained in this house; you surely have not been in the hut, at Mooseridge!"

"I have gone wherever uncle Chainbearer has gone, and shall go with him, so long as we both live. Nothing shall ever separate us again. His years demand this, and gratitude is added to my love. Frank might possibly do better than work for the little he receives; but he will not quit us. The poor love each other intensely!"

"But I have desired your uncle to use this house, and for your sake I should think he would accept the offer."

"How could he, and carry chain twenty miles distant? We have been here, occasionally, a few days at a time, but the work was to be done, and it must be done on the land itself."

"Of course, you merely gave your friends the pleasure of your company, and looked a little to their comforts, on their return from a hard day's work?"

Dus raised her eyes to mine; smiled; then she looked sad, her under-lip quivering slightly; after which a smile that was not altogether without humor succeeded. I watched these signs of varying feeling with an interest I cannot describe; for the play of virtuous and ingenuous

emotion on a lovely female countenance is one of the rarest sights in nature.

"I can carry chain,"—said the girl, at the close of this exhibition of feeling.

"You can carry chain, Ursula—Dus, or whatever I am to call you—"

"Call me Dus; I love that name best."

"You can carry chain, I suppose is true enough; but you do not mean that you have?"

The face of Dus flushed; but she looked me full in the eye, as she nodded her head to express an affirmative; and she smiled as sweetly as ever woman smiled.

"For amusement—to say you have done it—in jest!"

"To help my uncle and brother, who had not the means to hire a second man."

"Good God! Miss Malbone—Ursula— Dus—"

"The last is the most proper name for a chainbearess," rejoined the girl, smiling, and actually taking my hand by an involuntary movement of her sympathy in the shock I so evidently felt. "But why should you look upon that little toil as so shocking, when it is healthful and honest? You are thinking of a sister reduced to what strikes you as man's proper work."

Dus relinquished my hand almost as soon as she had touched it; and she did it with a slight start, as if shocked at her own temerity.

"What is man's work, and man's work only."

"Yet woman can perform it; and, as uncle Chainbearer will tell you, perform it well. I had no other concern, the month I was at work, than the fear that my strength would not enable me to do as much as my uncle and brother, and thus lessen the service they could render you each day. They kept me on dry land, so there were no wet feet, and your woods are as clear of underbrush as an orchard. There is no use in attempting to conceal the fact, for it is known to many, and would have reached your ears sooner or later. Then concealment is always painful to me, and never more so than when I hear you, and see you treating your hired servant as an equal."

"Miss Malbone! For God's sake, let me hear no more of this—old Andries judged rightly of me, in wishing to conceal this; for I should never have allowed it to go on for a moment."

"And in what manner could you have prevented it, Major Littlepage? My uncle has taken the business of you at so much the day, finding surveyor and laborers—poor, dear Frank! He, at least, does not rank with the laborers, and as for my uncle, he has long had an honest pride in being the best chainbearer in the country—why need his niece scruple about sharing in his well-earned reputation?"

"But you, Miss Malbone—dearest Dus—who have been so educated, who are born a lady, who are loved by Priscilla Bayard, the sister of Frank, are not in your proper sphere, while thus occupied."

"It is not so easy to say what is the proper sphere of a woman. I admit it ought to be, in general, in the domestic circle, and under the domestic roof; but circumstances must control that. We hear of wives who follow their husbands to the camp, and we hear of nuns who come out of their convents to attend the sick and wounded in hospitals. It does not strike me, then, as so bad in a girl who offers to aid her parent as I have aided mine, when the alternative was to suffer by want."

"Gracious Providence! And Andries has kept me in ignorance of all this; he knew my purse would have been his; and how could you have been in want in the midst of the abundance that reigns in this settlement?—which is only fifteen or twenty miles from your hut, as I know from the Chainbearer's letters."

"Food is plenty, I allow, but we had no money; and when the question was between beggary or exertion, we merely chose the last. My uncle did try old Killian, the black, for a day; but you know how hard it is to make one of those people understand anything that is a little intricate; and then I offered my services. I am intelligent enough, I trust,"—the girl smiled a little proudly as she said this,—"and you can have no notion how active and

strong I am for light work like this, and on my feet, until you put me to the proof. Remember, carrying chain is neither chopping wood nor piling logs; nor is it absolutely unfeminine."

"Nor raising churches," I answered, smiling, for it was not easy to resist the contagion of the girl's spirit, "at which business I have been an eye-witness of your dexterity. However, there will now be an end of this. It is fortunately in my power to offer such a situation and such emoluments to Mr. Malbone, as will at once enable him to place his sister in this house as its mistress, and under a roof that is at least respectable."

"Bless you for that!" cried Dus, making a movement toward catching my hand again; but checking it in time to render the deep blush that instantly suffused her face almost unnecessary. "Bless you for that! Frank is willing to do anything that is honest, and capable of doing anything that a gentleman should do. I am the great encumbrance on the poor fellow; for, could he leave me, many situations must be open to him in the towns. But I cannot quit my uncle, and Frank will not quit me. He does not understand uncle Chainbearer."

"Frank must be a noble fellow, and I honor him for his attachment to such a sister. This makes me only the more anxious to carry out my intentions."

"Which are such, I hope, that there is no impropriety in his sister's knowing them?"

This was said with such an expression of interest in the sweet blue eyes, and with so little of the air of common curiosity, that it completely charmed me.

"Certainly there is none," I answered, promptly enough even for a young man who was acting under the influence of so much ingenuous and strong native feeling; "and I shall have great pleasure in telling you. We have long been dissatisfied with our agent on this estate, and I had determined to offer it to your uncle. The same difficulty would have to be overcome in this case, as there was in making him a safe surveyor—the want of skill in figures, now this difficulty will not exist in the instance of your

brother; and the whole family, Chainbearer as well as the rest, will be benefited by giving the situation to Frank."

"You call him Frank!" cried Dus, laughing, and evidently delighted with what she heard. "That is a good omen; but if you raise me to the station of an agent's sister, I do not know but I shall insist on being called Ursula, at least, if not Miss Ursula."

I scarce knew what to make of this girl; there was so much of gayety, and even fun, blended with a mine of as deep feeling as I ever saw throwing up its signs to the human countenance. Her brother's prospects had made her even gay; though she still looked as if anxious to hear more.

"You may claim which you please, for Frank shall have his name put into the new power of attorney within the hour. Mr. Newcome has had a hint, by letter, of what is to come, and professes great happiness in getting rid of a vast deal of unrequited trouble."

"I am afraid there is little emolument, if he is glad to be rid of the office."

"I do not say he is glad; I only say he professes to be so. These are different things with certain persons. As for the emolument, it will not be much, certainly; though it will be enough to prevent Frank's sister from carrying chain, and leave her to exercise her talents and industry in their proper sphere. In the first place, every lease on the estate is to be renewed; and there being a hundred, and the tenant bearing the expense, it will at once put a considerable sum at your brother's disposition. I cannot say that the annual commissions will amount to a very great deal, though they will exceed a hundred a year by the terms on which the lands will be relet. The use of this house and farm, however, I did intend to offer to your uncle; and for the same reason, I shall offer them to Frank."

"With this house and farm we shall be rich!" exclaimed Dus, clasping her hands in delight. "I can gather a school of the better class of girls, and no one will be useless—no one idle. If I teach your tenants' daughters some of the

ideas of their sex and station, Mr. Littlepage, you will reap the benefit in the end. That will be some slight return for all your kindness."

"I wish all of your sex, and of the proper age, who are connected with me, no better instructress. Teach them your own warmth of heart, your own devotedness of feeling, your own truth, and your own frankness, and I will come and dwell on my own estate, as the spot nearest to paradise."

Dus looked a little alarmed, I thought, as if she feared she might have uttered too much; or, perhaps, that I was uttering too much. She rose, thanked me hurriedly, but in a very lady-like manner, and set about removing the breakfast service with as much diligence as if she had been a mere menial.

Such was my very first conversation with Ursula Malbone, her with whom I have since held so many, and those that have been very different! When I rose to seek the Chainbearer, it was with a feeling of interest in my late companion that was as strong as it was sudden. I shall not deny that her beauty had its influence; it would be unnatural that it should not; but it was less her exceeding beauty—and Ursula Malbone would have passed for one of the fairest of her sex—but it was less her beauty that attracted me than her directness, truth, and ingenuousness, so closely blended as all were with the feelings and delicacy of her sex. She had certainly done things which, had I merely heard of them, would have struck me unpleasantly, as even bold and forward, and which may now so strike the reader; but this would be doing Dus an injustice. No act, no word of hers, not even the taking of my hand, seemed to me, at the time, as in the least forward; the whole movement being so completely qualified by that intensity of feeling which caused her to think only of her brother. Nature and circumstances had combined to make her precisely the character she was; and I will confess I did not wish her to be, in a singular particular, different from what I found her.

Talk of Pris. Bayard in comparison with Ursula Malbone! Both had beauty, it is true, though the last was far

the handsomer; both had delicacy, and sentiment, and virtue, and all that pertains to a well-educated young woman, if you will; but Dus had a character of her own and principles, and an energy, and a decision, that made her the girl of ten thousand. I do not think I could be said to be actually in love when I left that room, for I do not wish to appear so very easy to receive impressions as all that would come to; but I will own no female had ever before interested me a tenth part as much, though I had known, and possibly admired her, a twelvemonth.

In the court I found Andries measuring his chains. This he did periodically; and it was as conscientiously as if he were weighing gold. The old man manifested no consciousness of the length of the *tête-à-tête* I had held with his niece; but on the contrary, the first words he uttered were to an effect that proved he fancied I had been alone.

"I peg your parton, lat," he said, holding his measuring rod in his mouth while he spoke. "I peg your parton, put this is very necessary work. I do not wish to haf any of your Yankee settlers crying out hereafter against the Chainpearer's surveys. Let 'em come a huntret or a t'ousant years hence, if t'ey will, and measure t'e lant; I want olt Andries' survey to stant."

"The variation of the compass will make some difference in the two surveys, my good friend, unless the surveyors are better than one commonly finds."

The old man dropped his rod and his chain, and looked despondingly at me.

"True," he said with emphasis. "You haf hit t'e nail on t'e heat, Mordaunt; t'at fariation is t'e ferry teffil to get along wit'! I haf triet it t'is-a-way, and I haf triet it t'at-a-way, and never coult I make heat or tail of it! I can see no goot of a fariation at all."

"What does your pretty assistant Dus think of it? Dus, the pretty chainbearer? You will lose your old, hard-earned appellation, which will be borne off by Miss Malbone."

"T'en Dus has peen telling you all apout it! A woman never can keep a secret. No, natur' hast mate 'em talk-atif, and t'e parrot will chatter."

"A woman likes variation, notwithstanding—did you consult Dus on that difficulty?"

"No, no, poy; I sait not'ing to Dus, ant I am sorry she has said any'ting to you apout t'is little matter of t'e chain. It was sorely against my will, Mortaunt, t'at t'e gal ever carriet it a rot; and was it to do over ag'in she shoult not carry it a rot—yet it woult have tone your heart goot to see how prettily she did her work; and how quick she wast, and how true; and how accurate she put down the marker; aad how sartain was her eye. Natur' made t'at fery gal for a chainpearer!"

"And a chainbearer she has been, and a chainbearer she ever will be, until she throws her chains on some poor fellow, and binds him down for life. Andries, you have an angel with you here, and not a woman."

Most men in the situation of the Chainbearer might have been alarmed at hearing such language coming from a young man, and under all the circumstances of the case. But Andries Coejemans never had any distrust of mortal who possessed his ordinary confidence; and I question if he ever entertained a doubt about myself on any point—the result of his own, rather than of my character. Instead of manifesting uneasiness or displeasure, he turned to me, his whole countenance illuminated with the affection he felt for his niece, and said,—

"T'e gal ist an excellent gal, Mortaunt; a capital creature! It woult haf tone your heart goot, I tell you, to see her carry chain! Your pocket is none t'e worse for t'e mont' she worked, t'ough I would not haf you t'ink I charget for her ast a man—no—she is town at only half-price, woman's work peing only woman's work; yet I do pelieve, on my conscience, t'at we went over more grount in t'at mont', t'an we could haf tone wit' any man t'at was to pe hiret in t'is part of t'e worlt—I do, indeet!"

How strange all this sounded to me! Charged for work done by Ursula Malbone, and charged at half-price! We are the creatures of convention, and the slaves of opinions that come we know not whence. I had got the notions of my caste, obtained in the silent, insinuating manner in

which all our characters are formed; and nothing short of absolute want could have induced me to accept pecuniary compensation from an individual for any personal service rendered. I had no profession, and it did not comport with our usages for a gentleman to receive money for personal service out of the line of a profession; an arbitrary rule, but one to which most of us submit with implicit obedience. The idea that Dus had been paid by myself for positive toil, therefore, was extremely repugnant to me; and it was only after reflection that I came to view the whole affair as I ought, and to pass to the credit of the noble-minded girl, and this without any drawback, an act that did her so much honor. I wish to represent myself as no better, or no wiser, or more rational than I was; and I fancy few young men of my age and habits would hear with much delight, at first, that the girl he himself felt impelled to love had been thus employed; while on the other hand, few would fail to arrive at the same conclusions, on reflection, as those I reached myself.

The discourse with Andries Coejemans was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Frank Malbone into the court. This was my first meeting with my young surveyor, and the Chainbearer introduced us to each other in his usual hearty and frank manner. In a minute we were acquainted; the old man inquiring as to the success of the settlers in getting up their "meetin'-us."

"I staid until they had begun to place the rafters," answered young Malbone, cheerfully, "and then I left them. The festivities are to end with a ball, I hear; but I was too anxious to learn how my sister reached home—I ought to say reached the 'Nest—to remain. We have little other home now, Mr. Littlepage, than the hut in the woods, and the roof your hospitality offers."

"Brother soldiers, sir, and brother soldiers in such a cause, ought to have no more scruples about accepting such hospitalities, as you call them, than in offering them. I am glad, however, that you have adverted to the subject, inasmuch as it opens the way to a proposition I have intended to make; which, if accepted, will make me your guest, and which may as well be made now as a week later."

Both Andries and Frank looked surprised; but I led them to a bench on the open side of the court, and invited them to be seated, while I explained myself. It may be well to say a word of that seat, in passing. It stood on the verge of a low cliff of rocks, on the side of the court which had been defended by palisades, when the French held the Canadas, and the remains of which were still to be seen. Here, as I was told before we left the spot, Dus, my pretty chainbearer, with a woman's instinct for the graceful and the beautiful, had erected an arbor, principally with her own hands, planted one of the swift-growing vines of our climate, and caused a seat to be placed within. The spot commanded a pleasing view of a wide expanse of meadows, and of a distant hill-side, that still lay in the virgin forest. Andries told me that his niece had passed much of her leisure time in that arbor, since the growth of the plant, with the advance of the season, had brought the seat into the shade.

Placing myself between the Chainbearer and Malbone, I communicated the intention I had formed of making the latter my agent. As an inducement to accept the situation, I offered the use of the 'Nest house and 'Nest-farm, reserving to myself the room or two that had been my grandfather's, and that only at the times of my annual visits to the property. As the farm was large, and of an excellent quality of land, it would abundantly supply the wants of a family of modest habits, and even admit of sales to produce the means of purchasing such articles of foreign growth as might be necessary. In a word, I laid before the listeners the whole of my plan, which was a good deal enlarged by a secret wish to render Ursula comfortable, without saying anything about the motive.

The reader is not to suppose I was exhibiting any extraordinary liberality in doing that which I have related. It must not be forgotten that land was a drug in the State of New York in the year 1784, as it is to-day on the Miami, Ohio, Mississippi, and other inland streams. The proprietors thought but little of their possessions as the means of present support, but rather maintained their settlements

than their settlements maintained them ; looking forward to another age, and to their posterity, for the rewards of all their trouble and investments.[1]

It is scarcely necessary to say my proposals were gladly accepted. Old Andries squeezed my hand, and I understood the pressure as fully as if he had spoken with the eloquence of Patrick Henry. Frank Malbone was touched ; and all parties were perfectly satisfied. The surveyor had his field-inkstand with him, as a matter of course, and I had the power-of-attorney in my pocket ready for the insertion of the Chainbearer's name, would he accept the office of agent. That of Malbone was written in its stead ; I signed ; Andries witnessed ; and we left the seat together ; Frank Malbone, in effect, temporarily master of the house in which we were, and his charming sister, as a necessary consequence, its mistress. It was a delicious moment to me when I saw Dus throw herself into her brother's arms, and weep on his bosom, as he communicated to her the joyful intelligence.

[1] The Manor of Rensselaerwick virtually extends forty-eight miles east and west and twenty-four north and south. It is situated in the very heart of New York, with three incorporated cities within its limits, built, in part, on small, older grants. Albany is a town of near, if not of quite 40,000 souls ; and Troy must now contain near 28,000. Yet the late patron, in the last conversation he ever held with the writer, only a few months before he died, stated that his grandfather was the first proprietor who ever reaped any material advantage from the estate, and his father the first who received any income of considerable amount. The home property, farms, and mills, furnished the income of the family for more than a century.—EDITOR.

CHAPTER XIII.

"A comfortable doctrine, and much may be said of it. Where lies your text?"

Twelfth Night.

A MONTH glided swiftly by. During that interval, Frank Malbone was fully installed, and Andries consented to suspend operations with his chain, until this necessary work was completed. Work it was; for every lease granted by my grandfather having run out, the tenants had remained on their farms by sufferance, or as occupants at will, holding from year to year under parole agreements made with Mr. Newcome, who had authority to go that far, but no farther.

It was seldom that a landlord, in that day, as I have already said, got any income from his lands during the first few years of their occupation. The great thing was to induce settlers to come; for where there was so much competition, sacrifices had to be made in order to effect this preliminary object. In compliance with this policy, my grandfather had let his wild lands for nominal rents in nearly every instance, with here and there a farm of particular advantages excepted; and, in most cases, the settler had enjoyed the use of the farm for several years, for no rent at all. He paid the taxes, which were merely nominal, and principally to support objects that were useful to the immediate neighborhood; such as the construction of roads, bridges, pounds, with other similar works, and the administration of justice. At the expiration of this period of non-payment of rents, a small sum per acre was agreed to be paid, rather than actually paid, not a

dollar of which had ever left the settlement. The landlord was expected to head all subscriptions for everything that was beneficial, or which professed to be beneficial to the estate; and the few hundreds a year, two or three at most, that my rent-roll actually exhibited, were consumed among the farms of the 'Nest. It was matter of record that not one shilling had the owner of this property, as yet, been able to carry away with him for his own private purposes. It is true, it had been in his power to glean a little each year for such a purpose; but it was not considered politic, and consequently it was not the practice of the country, in regard to estates so situated and before the Revolution; though isolated cases to the contrary, in which the landlord was particularly avaricious, or particularly necessitous, may have existed. Our New York proprietors, in that day, were seldom of the class that needed money. Extravagance had been little known to the province, and could not yet be known to the State; consequently, few lost their property from their expenditures, though some did from mismanagement. The trade of "puss in the corner," or of shoving a man out of his property, in order to place one's self in it, was little practised previously to the Revolution; and the community always looked upon the intruder into family property with a cold eye, unless he came into possession by fair purchase, and for a sufficient price. Legal speculations were then nearly unknown; and he who got rich was expected to do so by manly exertions, openly exercised, and not by the dark machinations of a sinister practice of the law.

In our case, not a shilling had we, as yet, been benefited by the property of Ravensnest. All that had ever been received, and more too, had been expended on the spot; but a time had now arrived when it was just and reasonable that the farms should make some returns for all our care and outlays. Eleven thousand acres were under lease, divided among somewhat less than a hundred tenants. Until the first day of the succeeding April, these persons could hold their lands under the verbal contracts; but, after that day, new leases became necessary. It is not

usual for the American landlord to be exacting. It is out of his power, indeed, for the simple reason that land is so much more abundant than men; but it is not the practice of the country, a careless indulgence being usually the sin of the caste; an indulgence that admits of an accumulation of arrears, which, when pay-day does arrive, is apt to bring with it ill-blood and discontent. It is an undeniable truth in morals, that whatever may be the feeling at the time, men are rarely grateful for a government that allows their vices to have a free exercise. They invariably endeavor to throw a portion of the odium of their own misdeeds on the shoulders of those who should have controlled them. It is the same with debts; for, however much we may beg for lenity at the time, accumulations of interest wear a very hostile aspect when they present themselves in a sum-total, at a moment it is inconvenient to balance the account. If those who have been thus placed would only remember that there is a last great account that every man must be called on to settle, arrearages and all, the experience of their worldly affairs might suggest a lesson that would be infinitely useful. It is fortunate for us, without exception, that there is a Mediator to aid us in the task.

The time had come when Ravensnest might be expected to produce something. Guided by the surveys, and our own local knowledge, and greatly aided by the Chainbearer's experience, Frank Malbone and I passed one entire fortnight in classifying the farms; putting the lowest into the shilling category; others into the eighteen pence; and a dozen farms or so into the two shillings. The result was, that we placed six thousand acres at a shilling a year rent; three thousand eight hundred at eighteen pence the acre; and twelve hundred acres at two shillings. The whole made a rental of fourteen thousand one hundred shillings, or a fraction more than seventeen hundred and forty-two dollars per annum. This sounded pretty well for the year 1784, and it was exclusively of the 'Nest farm, of Jason Newcome's mills and timber-land, which he had hitherto enjoyed for nothing, or for a mere nominal rent, and all the wild lands.

I will confess I exulted greatly in the result of our calcu-

lations. Previously to that day, I had placed no dependence on Ravensnest for income, finding my support in the other property I had inherited from my grandfather. On paper, my income was more than doubled, for I received then only some eleven hundred a year (I speak of dollars, not pounds) from my other property. It is true, the last included a great many town-lots that were totally unproductive, but which promised to be very valuable, like Ravensnest itself, at some future day. Most things in America looked to the future, then as now; though I trust the hour of fruition is eventually to arrive. My town property has long since become very valuable, and tolerably productive.

As soon as our scheme for reletting was matured, Frank summoned the occupants of the farms, in bodies of ten, to present themselves at the 'Nest, in order to take their new leases. We had ridden round the estate, and conversed with the tenantry, and had let my intentions be known previously, so that little remained to be discussed. The farms were all relet for three lives, and on my own plan, no one objecting to the rent, which, it was admitted all round, was not only reasonable, but low. Circumstances were then too recent to admit of the past's being forgotten; and the day when the last lease was signed was one of general satisfaction. I did think of giving a landlord's dinner, and of collecting the whole settlement in a body, for the purposes of jovial and friendly communion; but old Andries threw cold water on the project.

"T'at would do, Mortaunt," he said, "if you hat only raal New Yorkers, or Middle States' men to teal wit'; but more t'an half of t'ese people are from t'e Eastern States, where t'ere are no such t'ings as lantlorts and tenants, on a large scale you understant; and t'ere is n't a man among 'em all t'at is n't looking forwart to own his farm one tay, by hook or by crook. T'ey 're as jealous of t'eir tignities as if each man wast a full colonel, and will not t'ank you for a tinner at which t'ey will seem to play secont fittle."

Although I knew the Chainbearer had his ancient Dutch prejudices against our Eastern brethren, I also knew that there was a good deal of truth in what he said. Frank Malbone, who was Rhode Island born, had the same notions,

I found on inquiry ; and I was disposed to defer to his opinions. Frank Malbone was a gentleman himself, and men of that class are always superior to low jealousies ; but Frank must know better how to appreciate the feelings of those among whom he had been born and bred than I could possibly know how to do it myself. The project of the dinner was accordingly abandoned.

It remained to make a new arrangement and a final settlement with Mr. Jason Newcome, who was much the most thriving man at Ravensnest ; appearing to engross in his single person all the business of the settlement. He was magistrate, supervisor, deacon, according to the Congregational plan, or whatever he is called, miller, store-keeper, will-drawer, tavern-keeper by deputy, and adviser-general, for the entire region. Everything seemed to pass through his hands ; or, it would be better to say, everything entered them, though little indeed came out again. This man was one of those moneyed gluttons, on a small scale, who live solely to accumulate ; in my view, the most odious character on earth ; the accumulations having none of the legitimate objects of proper industry and enterprise in view. So long as there was a man near him whom he supposed to be richer than himself, Mr. Newcome would have been unhappy ; though he did not know what to do with the property he had already acquired. One does not know whether to detest or pity such characters the most ; since, while they are and must be repugnant to every man of right feelings and generous mind, they carry in their own bosoms the worm that never dies, to devour their own vitals.

Mr. Newcome had taken his removal from the agency in seeming good part, affecting a wish to give it up from the moment he had reason to think it was to be taken from him. On this score, therefore, all was amicable, not a complaint being made on his side. On the contrary, he met Frank Malbone with the most seeming cordiality, and we proceeded to business with as much apparent good-will as had been manifested in any of the previous bargains. Mr. Newcome did nothing directly ; a circuitous path being the one he had been accustomed to travel from childhood.

"You took the mill-lot and the use of five hundred acres of wood-land from my grandfather for three lives; or failing these, for a full term of one-and-twenty years, I find, Mr. Newcome," I remarked, as soon as we were seated at business, "and for a nominal rent; the mills to be kept in repair, and to revert to the landlord at the termination of the lease."

"Yes, Major Littlepage, that was the bargain, I will allow, though a hard one has it proved to me. The war come on," —this man was what was called liberally educated, but he habitually used bad grammar—"the war come on, and with it hard times, and I did n't know but the major would be willing to consider the circumstances, if we make a new bargain."

"The war cannot have had much effect to your prejudice, as grain of all sorts bore a high price; and I should think the fact that large armies were near by, to consume everything you had to sell, and that at high prices, more than compensated for any disadvantage it might have induced. You had the benefits of two wars, Mr. Newcome; that of 1775, and a part of that of 1756."

My tenant made no answer to this, finding I had reflected on the subject, and was prepared to answer him. After a pause, he turned to more positive things.

"I suppose the major goes on the principle of supposing a legal right in an old tenant to enj'y a new lease? I 'm told he has admitted this much in all his dealin's."

"Then you have been misinformed, sir. I am not weak enough to admit a right that the lease itself, which, in the nature of things, must and does form the tenant's only title, contradicts in terms. Your legal interest in the property ceases altogether in a few days from this time."

"Y-a-a-s, y-a-a-s, sir, I conclude it doose," said the 'squire, leaning back in his chair, until his body was at an angle of some sixty or seventy degrees with the floor, "I conclude it doose accordin' to the covenants; but between man and man, there ought to be suthin' more bindin'."

"I know of nothing more binding in a lease than its covenants, Mr. Newcome."

"Wa-a-l!"—how that man would "wa-a-a-l" when he wished to circumvent a fellow-creature; and with what a Jesuitical accent he did pronounce the word! "Wa-a-a-l—that 's accordin' to folk's idees. A covenant may be hard; and then, in my judgment, it ought to go for nothin'. I 'm agin all hard covenants."

"Harkee, frient Jason," put in the Chainbearer, who was an old acquaintance of Mr. Newcome's, and appeared thoroughly to understand his character; "harkee, frient Jason; do you gife back unexpected profits, ven it so happens t'at more are mate on your own pargains t'an were looket for?"

"It 's not of much use to converse with you, Chainbearer, on such subjects, for we 'll never think alike," answered the 'squire, leaning still farther back in his chair; "you 're what I call a particular man, in your notions, and we should never agree."

"Still, there is good sense in the Chainbearer's question," I added. "Unless prepared to answer 'yes,' I do not see how you can apply your own principle with any justice. But let this pass as it will, why are covenants made, if they are not to be regarded?"

"Wa-a-l, now, accordin' to my notion, a covenant in a lease is pretty much like a water-course in a map; not a thing to be partic'lar at all about; but as water-courses look well on a map, so covenants read well in a lease. Landlords like to have 'em, and tenants ain't particular."

"You can hardly be serious in either case, I should hope, Mr. Newcome, but are pleased to exercise your ingenuity on us for your own amusement. There is nothing so particular in the covenants of your lease as to require any case of conscience to decide on its points."

"There 's this in it, major, that you get the whull property back ag'in, if you choose to claim it."

"Claim it!—the whole property has been mine, or my predecessors', ever since it was granted to us by the crown. All your rights come from your lease; and when that terminates, your rights terminate."

"Not accordin' to my judgment, major; not accordin' to

my judgment. I built the mills at my own cost, you 'll remember."

"I certainly know, sir, that you built the mills at what you call your own cost; that is, you availed yourself of a natural mill-seat, used our timber and other materials, and constructed the mills, such as they are, looking for your reward in their use for the term of a quarter of a century, for a mere nominal rent—having saw-logs at command as you wanted them, and otherwise enjoying privileges under one of the most liberal leases that was ever granted."

"Yes, sir, but that was in the bargain I made with your grand'ther. It was agreed between us, at the time I took the place, that I was to cut logs at will, and of course use the materials on the ground for buildin'. You see, major, your grand'ther wanted the mills built desperately; and so he gave them conditions accordin'ly. You 'll find every syllable on 't in the lease."

"No doubt, Mr. Newcome; and you will also find a covenant in the same lease, by which your interest in the property is to cease in a few days."

"Wa-a-l, now, I don't understand leases in that way. Surely it was never intended a man should erect mills, to lose all right in 'em at the end of five-and-twenty years."

"That will depend on the bargain made at the time. Some persons erect mills and houses that have no rights in them at all. They are paid for their work as they build."

"Yes, yes—carpenters and mill-wrights, you mean. But I 'm speakin' of no such persons; I 'm speakin' of honest, hard-workin', industrious folks, that give their labor and time to build up a settlement; and not of your mechanics who work for hire. Of course, they 're to be paid for what they do, and there 's an eend on 't."

"I am not aware that all honest persons are hard-working, any more than that all hard-working persons are honest. I wish to be understood that, in the first place, Mr. Newcome. Phrases will procure no concession from me. I agree with you, however, perfectly, in saying that when a man is paid for his work, there will be what you call 'an end of it.' Now twenty-three days from this moment, you

will have been paid for all you have done on my property according to your own agreement; and, by your own reasoning, there must be an end of your connection with that property."

"The major does n't ra-a-lly mean to rob me of all my hard earnin's!"

"Mr. Newcome, *rob* is a hard word, and one that I beg may not be again used between you and me. I have no intention to rob you, or to let you rob me. The pretence that you are not, and were not acquainted with the conditions of this lease, comes rather late in the day, after a possession of a quarter of a century. You know very well that my grandfather would not sell, and that he would do no more than lease; if it were your wish to purchase, why did you not go elsewhere, and get land in fee? There were, and still are, thousands of acres to be sold, all around you. I have lands to sell, myself, at Mooseridge, as the agent of my father and Colonel Follock, within twenty miles of you, and they tell me capital mill-seats in the bargain."

"Yes, major, but not so much to my notion as this—I kind o' wanted this!"

"But I kind o' want this, too; and as it is mine, I think, in common equity, I have the best claim to enjoy it."

"It 's on equity I want to put this very matter, major—I know the law is agin me—that is, some people say it is; but some think not, now we 've had a revolution; but, let the law go as it may, there 's such a thing as what I call right between man and man."

"Certainly; and law is an invention to enforce it. It is right I should do exactly what my grandfather agreed to do for me, five-and-twenty years ago, in relation to these mills; and it is right you should do what you agreed to do, for yourself."

"I have done so. I agreed to build the mills, in a sartain form and mode, and I done it. I 'll defy mortal man to say otherwise. The saw-mill was smashing away at the logs within two months a'ter I got the lease, and we began to grind in four!"

"No doubt, sir, you were active and industrious—though,

to be frank with you, I will say that competent judges tell me neither mill is worth much now."

"That's on account of the lease,"—cried Mr. Newcome, a little too hastily, possibly, for the credit of his discretion; "how did I know when it would run out? Your gran'ther granted it for three lives, and twenty-one years afterward, and I did all a man could to make it last as long as I should myself; but here I am, in the prime of life, and in danger of losing my property!"

I knew all the facts of the case perfectly, and had intended to deal liberally with Mr. Newcome from the first. In his greediness for gain he had placed his lives on three infants, although my grandfather had advised him to place at least one on himself; but, no—Mr. Newcome had fancied the life of an infant better than that of a man; and in three or four years after the signature of the lease, his twenty-one years had begun to run, and were now near expiring. Even under this certainly unlooked-for state of things, the lease had been a very advantageous one for the tenant; and, had one of his lives lasted a century, the landlord would have looked in vain for any concession on that account; landlords never asking for or expecting favors of that sort; indeed, most landlords would be ashamed to receive them; nevertheless, I was disposed to consider the circumstances, to overlook the fact that the mills and all the other buildings on the property were indifferently built, and to relet, for an additional term of twenty-one years, woodlands, farms, buildings, and other privileges, for about one third of the money that Mr. Newcome himself would have been apt to ask, had he the letting instead of myself. Unwilling to prolong a discussion with a man who, by his very nature, was unequal to seeing more than one side of a subject, I cut the matter short, by telling him my terms without further delay.

Notwithstanding all his acting and false feeling, the 'squire was so rejoiced to learn my moderation, that he could not but openly express his feelings; a thing he would not have done, did he not possess the moral certainty I would not depart from my word. I felt it necessary, however, to explain myself,

"Before I give you this new lease, Mr. Newcome," I added, holding the instrument signed in my hand, "I wish to be understood. It is not granted under the notion that you have any right to ask it, beyond the allowance that is always made by a liberal landlord to a reasonably good tenant; which is simply a preference over others on the same terms. As for the early loss of your lives, it was your own fault. Had the infants you named, or had one of them, passed the state of childhood, it might have lived to be eighty, in which case my timber-land would have been stripped without any return to its true owner; but your children died, and the lease was brought within reasonable limits. Now, the only inducement I have for offering the terms I do, is the liberality that is usual with landlords; what is conceded is conceded as no right, but as an act of liberality."

This was presenting to my tenant the most incomprehensible of all reasons for doing anything. A close and sordid calculator himself, he was not accustomed to give any man credit for generosity; and, from the doubting, distrustful manner in which he received the paper, I suspected at the moment that he was afraid there was some project for taking him in. A rogue is always distrustful, and as often betrays his character to honest men by that as by any other failing. I was not to regulate my own conduct, however, by the weaknesses of Jason Newcome, and the lease was granted.

I could wish here to make one remark. There ought certainly to be the same principle of good-fellowship existing between the relations of landlord and tenant that exists in the other relations of life, and which creates a moral tie between parties that have much connection in their ordinary interests, and that to a degree to produce preferences and various privileges of a similar character. This I am far from calling in question; and, on the whole, I think, of all that class of relations, the one in question is to be set down as among the most binding and sacred. Still, the mere moral rights of the tenant must depend on the rigid maintenance of all the rights of the landlord; the legal and

moral united; and the man who calls in question either of the latter surely violates every claim to have his own pretensions allowed, beyond those which the strict letter of the law will yield to him. The landlord who will grant a new lease to the individual who is endeavoring to undermine his rights, by either direct or indirect means, commits the weakness of arming an enemy with the knife by which he is himself to be assaulted, in addition to the error of granting power to a man who, under the character of a spurious liberty, is endeavoring to unsettle the only conditions on which civilized society can exist. If landlords will exhibit the weakness, they must blame themselves for the consequences.

I got rid of Mr. Newcome by the grant of the lease, his whole manœuvring having been attempted solely to lower the rent; for he was much too shrewd to believe in the truth of his own doctrines on the subject of right and wrong. That same day my axe-men appeared at the 'Nest, having passed the intermediate time in looking at various tracts of land that were in the market, and which they had not found so eligible, in the way of situation, quality, or terms, as those I offered. By this time, the surveyed lots of Mooseridge were ready, and I offered to sell them to these emigrants. The price was only a dollar an acre, with a credit of ten years; the interest to be paid annually. One would have thought that the lowness of the price would have induced men to prefer lands in fee to lands on lease; but these persons, to a man, found it more to their interests to take farms on three-lives leases, being rent free for the first five years, and at nominal rents for the remainder of the term, than to pay seven dollars a year of interest, and a hundred dollars in money, at the expiration of the credit.[1]

[1] The fact here stated by Mr. Littlepage should never be forgotten; inasmuch as it colors the entire nature of the pretension now set up as to the exactions of leases. No man in New York need ever have leased a farm for the want of an opportunity of purchasing, there never having been a time when land for farms in fee has not been openly on sale within the bounds of the State; and land every way as eligible as that leased. In few cases have two adjoining estates been leased; and where such has been the fact, the husbandman might

This fact, of itself, goes to show how closely these men calculated their means, and the effect their decisions might have on their interests. Nor were their decisions always wrong. Those who can remember the start the country took shortly after the peace of '83, the prices that the settlers on new lands obtained for their wheat, ashes, and pork, —three dollars a bushel often for the first, three hundred dollars a ton for the second, and eight or ten dollars a hundred for the last,—will at once understand that the occupant of new lands at that period obtained enormous wages for a laborer, by means of the rich, unexhausted lands he was thus permitted to occupy. No doubt he would have been in a better situation had he owned his farm in fee at the end of his lease; so would the merchant, who builds a ship and clears her cost by her first freight, have been a richer man had he cleared the cost of two ships instead of one; but he has done well, notwithstanding; and it is not to be forgotten that the man who commences life with an axe and a little household furniture is in the situation of a mere day-laborer. The addition to his means of the use of land is the very circumstance that enables him to rise above his humble position, and to profit by the cultivation of the soil. At the close of the last century, and at the commencement of the present, the country was so placed as to render every stroke of the axe directly profitable, the very labor that was expended in clearing away the trees meeting with a return so liberal by the sale of the ashes manufactured, as to induce even speculators to engage in the occupation. It may one day be a subject of curious inquiry to ascertain how so much was done as is known to have been done at that period, toward converting the wilderness into a garden; and I will here record, for the benefit of posterity, a brief sketch of one of the processes of getting to be comfortable, if not rich, that was much used in that day.

always have found a farm in fee, at the cost of half a day's travelling. The benefits to the landlord have usually been so remote on the estate leased, that by far the greater proportion of the proprietors have preferred selling at once, to waiting for the tardy operations of time.—EDITOR.

It was a season's work for a skilful axe-man to chop, log, burn, clear, and sow ten acres of forest land. The ashes he manufactured. For the heavier portions of the work, such as the logging, he called on his neighbors for aid, rendering similar assistance by way of payment. One yoke of oxen frequently sufficed for two or three farms, and "logging-bees" have given rise to a familiar expression among us, that is known as legislative "log-rolling"; a process by which, as is well known, one set of members supports the project of another set, on the principle of reciprocity.

Now, ten acres of land, cropped for the first time, might very well yield a hundred and fifty bushels of merchantable wheat, which would bring three hundred dollars in the Albany market. They would also make a ton of pot-ashes, which would sell for at least two hundred dollars. This is giving five hundred dollars for a single year's work. Allowing for all the drawbacks of buildings, tools, chains, transportation, provisions, etc., and one half of this money might very fairly be set down as clear profit; very large returns to one who, before he got his farm, was in the situation of a mere day-laborer, content to toil for eight or nine dollars the month.

That such was the history, in its outlines, of the rise of thousands of the yeomen who now dwell in New York, is undeniable; and it goes to show that if the settler in a new country has to encounter toil and privations, they are not always without their quick rewards. In these later times, men go on the open prairies, and apply the plough to an ancient sward; but I question if they would not rather encounter the virgin forests of 1790, with the prices of that day, than run over the present park-like fields, in order to raise wheat for thirty-seven and a half cents per bushel, have no ashes at any price, and sell their pork at two dollars the hundred!

CHAPTER XIV.

"Intent to blend her with his lot,
Fate formed her all that he was not;
And, as by mere unlikeness, thought
Associate we see,
Their hearts, from very difference, caught
A perfect sympathy."

PINCKNEY.

ALL this time I saw Ursula Malbone daily, and at all hours of the day. Inmates of the same dwelling, we met constantly, and many were the interviews and conversations which took place between us. Had Dus been the most finished coquette in existence, her practised ingenuity could not have devised more happy expedients to awaken interest in me than those which were really put in use by this singular girl, without the slightest intention of bringing about any such result. Indeed, it was the nature, the total absence of art, that formed one of the brightest attractions of her character, and gave so keen a zest to her cleverness and beauty. In that day, females, while busied in the affairs of their household, appeared in "short gown and petticoat," as it was termed, a species of livery that even ladies often assumed of a morning. The toilette was of far wider range in 1784 than it is now, the distinctions between morning and evening dress being much broader then than at present. As soon as she was placed really at the head of her brother's house, Ursula Malbone set about the duties of her new station quietly and without the slightest fuss, but actively and with interest. She seemed to me to possess, in a high degree, that particular merit of carrying on the details of her office in a silent, unobtrusive manner, while they were performed most effectually, and entirely to the comfort of those

for whose benefit her care was exercised. I am not one of those domestic canters who fancy a woman, in order to make a good wife, needs be a drudge, and possess the knowledge of a cook or a laundress; but it is certainly of great importance that she have the faculty of presiding over her family with intelligence, and an attention that is suited to her means of expenditure. Most of all it is important that she know how to govern without being seen or heard.

The wife of an educated man should be an educated woman; one fit to be his associate, qualified to mingle her tastes with his own, to exchange ideas, and otherwise to be his companion, in an intellectual sense. These are the higher requisites; a gentleman accepting the minor qualifications as so many extra advantages, if kept within their proper limits; but as positive disadvantages if they interfere with, or in any manner mar the manners, temper, or mental improvement of the woman whom he has chosen as his wife, and not as his domestic. Some sacrifices may be necessary in those cases in which cultivation exists without a sufficiency of means; but even then, it is seldom indeed that a woman of the proper qualities may not be prevented from sinking to the level of a menial. As for the cant of the newspapers on such subjects, it usually comes from those whose homes are mere places for "board and lodging."

The address with which Dus discharged all the functions of her new station, while she avoided those that were unseemly and out of place, charmed me almost as much as her spirit, character, and beauty. The negroes removed all necessity for her descending to absolute toil; and with what pretty, feminine dexterity did she perform the duties that properly belonged to her station! Always cheerful, frequently singing, not in a noisy, milk-maid mood, but at those moments when she might fancy herself unheard, and in sweet, plaintive songs that seemed to recall the scenes of other days. Always cheerful, however, is saying a little too much; for occasionally Dus was sad. I found her in tears three or four times, but did not dare inquire into their cause. There was scarce time, indeed; for the instant I appeared, she dried her eyes, and received me with smiles.

It is scarcely necessary to say that to me the time passed pleasantly, and amazingly fast. Chainbearer remained at the 'Nest by my orders, for he would not yield to requests, and I do not remember a more delightful month than that proved to be. I made a very general acquaintance with my tenants, and found many of them as straightforward, honest, hard-working yeomen as one could wish to meet. My brother major, in particular, was a hearty old fellow, and often came to see me, living on the farm that adjoined my own. He growled a little about the sect that had got possession of the "meetin'-us," but did it in a way to show there was not much gall in his own temperament.

"I don't rightly understand these majority matters," said the old fellow, one day that we were talking the matter over, "though I very well know Newcome always manages to get one, let the folks think as they will. I 've known the 'squire contrive to cut a majority out of about a fourth of all present, and he does it in a way that is desp'ret ingen'ous, I will allow though I 'm afeard it 's neither law nor gospel."

"He certainly managed, in the affair of the denomination, to make a plurality of one appear in the end to be a very handsome majority over all."

"Ay, there 's twists and turns in these things that 's beyond my l'arnin', though I s'pose all 's right. It don't matter much in the long run, a'ter all, where a man worships, provided he worships ; or who preaches, so that he listens."

I think this liberality—if that be the proper word—in religious matters, is fast increasing among us ; though liberality may be but another term for indifference. As for us Episcopalians, I wonder there are any left in the country, though we are largely on the increase. There we were, a church that insisted on Episcopal ministrations—on confirmation in particular—left for a century without a bishop, and able to conform to practices that it was insisted on were essential, and this solely because it did not suit the policy of the mother country to grant us prelates of our own, or to send us, occasionally even, one of hers. How miserable do human expedients often appear when they are tried by the

tests of common-sense! A church of God, insisting on certain spiritual essentials that it denies to a portion of its people, in order to conciliate worldly interests! It is not the church of England, however, nor the government of England, that is justly obnoxious to such an accusation; something equally bad, and just as inconsistent, attaching itself to the ecclesiastical influence of every other system in Christendom under which the state is tied to religion by means of human provisions. The mistake is in connecting the things of the world with the things that are of God.

Alas!—alas! When you sever that pernicious tie, is the matter much benefited? How is it among ourselves? Are not sects, and shades of sects, springing up among us on every side, until the struggle between parsons is getting to be not who shall aid in making most Christians, but who shall gather into his fold most sectarians? As for the people themselves, instead of regarding churches, even after they have established them, and that too very much on their own authority, they first consider their own tastes, enmities, and predilections, respecting the priest far more than the altar, and set themselves up as a sort of religious constituencies, who are to be represented directly in the government of Christ's followers on the earth. Half of a parish will fly off in a passion to another denomination if they happen to fall into a minority. Truly a large portion of our people is beginning to act in this matter as if they had a sense of "giving their support" to the Deity, patronizing Him in this temple or the other, as may suit the feeling or the interest of the moment.[1]

But I am not writing homilies, and will return to the 'Nest and my friends. A day or two after Mr. Newcome received his new lease, Chainbearer, Frank, Dus, and I

[1] If Mr. Littlepage wrote thus, thirty or forty years since, how would he have written to-day, when we have had loud protestations flourishing around us in the public journals, that this or that sectarian polity was most in unison with a republican form of government? What renders this assumption as absurd as it is presuming is the well-known fact that it comes from those who have ever been loudest in their denunciations of a union between church and state.

were in the little arbor that overlooked the meadows, when we saw Sureflint, moving at an Indian's pace, along a path that came out of the forest, and which was known to lead toward Mooseridge. The Onondago carried his rifle as usual, and bore on his back a large bunch of something that we supposed to be game, though the distance prevented our discerning its precise character. In half a minute he disappeared behind a projection of the cliffs, trotting towards the buildings.

"My friend the Trackless has been absent from us now a longer time than usual," Ursula remarked, as she turned her head from following the Indian's movements, as long as he remained in sight; "but he reappears, loaded with something for our benefit."

"He has passed most of his time of late with your uncle, I believe," I answered, following Dus's fine eyes with my own, the pleasantest pursuit I could discover in that remote quarter of the world. "I have written this to my father, who will be glad to hear tidings of his old friend."

"He is much with my uncle, as you say, being greatly attached to him. Ah! here he comes, with such a load on his shoulders as an Indian does not love to bear; though even a chief will condescend to carry game."

As Dus ceased speaking, Sureflint threw a large bunch of pigeons, some two or three dozen birds, at her feet, turning away quietly, like one who had done his part of the work, and who left the remainder to be managed by the squaws.

"Thank you, Trackless," said the pretty housekeeper—"thankee kindly. These are beautiful birds, and as fat as butter. We shall have them cleaned, and cooked in all manner of ways."

"All squab—just go to fly—take him ebbery one in nest," answered the Indian."

"Nests must be plenty, then, and I should like to visit them," I cried, remembering to have heard strange marvels of the multitudes of pigeons that were frequently found in their "roosts," as the encampments they made in the woods were often termed in the parlance of the country. "Can we not go in a body and visit this roost?"

"It might pe tone," answered the Chainbearer; "it might be tone, and it is time we wast moving in t'eir tirection, if more lant is to pe surveyet, ant t'ese pirts came from t'e hill I suppose t'ey do. Mooseridge promiset to have plenty of pigeons t'is season."

"Just so," answered Sureflint. "Million, t'ousan', hundred—more too. Nebber see more; nebber see so many. Great Spirit don't forget poor Injin; sometime give him deer—sometime salmon—sometime pigeon; plenty for ebberybody; only t'ink so."

"Ay, Sureflint; only t'ink so, inteet, and t'ere is enough for us all, and plenty to spare. Got is pountiful to us, put we ton't often know how to use his pounty," answered Chainbearer, who had been examining the birds; "finer squaps are n't often met wit'; and I too shoult like amazingly to see one more roost pefore I go to roost myself."

"As for the visit to the roost," cried I, "that is settled for to-morrow. But a man who has just come out of a war like the last, into peaceable times, has no occasion to speak of his end, Chainbearer. You are old in years, but young in mind, as well as body."

"Bot' nearly wore out—bot' nearly wore out! It is well to tell an olt fool t'e contrary, put I know petter. T'reescore and ten is man's time, and I haf fillet up t'e numper of my tays. Got knows pest, when it will pe his own pleasure to call me away; put, let it come when it will, I shall now tie happy, comparet wit' what I shoult haf tone a mont' ago."

"You surprise me, my dear friend! What has happened to make this difference in your feelings? It cannot be that you are changed in any essential."

"T'e tifference is in Dus's prospects. Now Frank has a goot place, my gal will not be forsaken."

"Forsaken! Dus—Ursula—Miss Malbone forsaken! That could never happen, Andries, Frank or no Frank."

"I hope not—I hope not, lat; put t'e gal pegins to weep, and we'll talk no more apout it. Harkee, Susquesus; my old frient, can you guite us to t'is roost?"

"Why no do it, eh? Path wide—open whole way. Plain as river."

"Well, t'en, we wilt all pe off for t'e place in t'e morning. My new assistant is near, and it is high time Frank and I hat gone into t'e woots ag'in."

I heard this arrangement made, though my eyes were following Dus, who had started from her seat, and rushed into the house, endeavoring to hide emotions that were not to be hushed. A minute later I saw her at the window of her own room, smiling, though the cloud had not yet entirely dispersed.

Next morning early our whole party left the 'Nest for the hut at Mooseridge, and the pigeon-roosts. Dus and the black female servant travelled on horseback, there being no want of cattle at the 'Nest, where, as I now learned, my grandfather had left a quarter of a century before, among a variety of other articles, several side-saddles. The rest of us proceeded on foot, though we had no less than three sumpter beasts to carry our food, instruments, clothes, etc. Each man was armed, almost as a matter of course in that day, though I carried a double-barrelled fowling-piece myself, instead of a rifle. Susquesus acted as our guide.

We were quite an hour before we reached the limits of the settled farms on my own property; after which, we entered the virgin forest. In consequence of the late war, which had brought everything like the settlement of the country to a dead stand, a new district had then little of the straggling, suburb-like clearings, which are apt now to encircle the older portions of a region that is in the state of transition. On the contrary, the last well-fenced and reasonably well-cultivated farm passed, we plunged into the boundless woods, and took a complete leave of nearly every vestige of civilized life, as one enters the field on quitting a town in France. There was a path, it is true, following the line of blazed trees; but it was scarcely beaten, and was almost as illegible as a bad hand. Still, one accustomed to the forest had little difficulty in following it; and Susquesus would have had none in finding his way, had there

been no path at all. As for the Chainbearer, he moved forward too, with the utmost precision and confidence, the habit of running straight lines amid trees having given his eye an accuracy that almost equalled the species of instinct that was manifested by the Trackless himself, on such subjects.

This was a pleasant little journey, the depths of the forest rendering the heats of the season as agreeable as was possible. We were four hours in reaching the foot of the little mountain on which the birds had built their nests, where we halted to take some refreshments.

Little time is lost at meals in the forest, and we were soon ready to ascend the hill. The horses were left with the blacks, Dus accompanying us on foot. As we left the spring where we had halted, I offered her an arm to aid in the ascent; but she declined it, apparently much amused that it should have been offered.

"What, I, a chainbearess!" she cried, laughing—"I, who have fairly wearied out Frank, and even made my uncle feel tired, though he would never own it—I accept an arm to help me up a hill! You forget, Major Littlepage, that the first ten years of my life were passed in a forest, and that a year's practice has brought back all my old habits, and made me a girl of the woods again."

"I scarce know what to make of you, for you seem fitted for any situation in which you may happen to be thrown," I answered, profiting by the circumstance that we were out of the hearing of our companions, who had all moved ahead, to utter more than I otherwise might venture to say; "at one time I fancy you the daughter of one of my own tenants; at another, the heiress of some ancient patroon."

Dus laughed again; then she blushed; and for the remainder of the short ascent, she remained silent. Short the ascent was, and we were soon on the summit of the hill. So far from needing my assistance, Dus actually left me behind, exerting herself in a way that brought her up at the side of the Trackless, who led our van. Whether this was done in order to prove how completely she was a forest girl, or whether my words had aroused those feelings that are apt to

render a female impulsive, is more than I can say even now; though I suspected at the time that the latter sensations had quite as much to do with this extraordinary activity as the former. I was not far behind, however, and when our party came fairly upon the roost, the Trackless, Dus, and myself, were all close together.

I scarce know how to describe that remarkable scene. As we drew near to the summit of the hill, pigeons began to be seen fluttering among the branches over our heads, as individuals are met along the roads that lead into the suburbs of a large town. We had probably seen a thousand birds glancing around among the trees, before we came in view of the roost itself. The numbers increased as we drew nearer, and presently the forest was alive with them. The fluttering was incessant, and often startling as we passed ahead, our march producing a movement in the living crowd, that really became confounding. Every tree was literally covered with nests, many having at least a thousand of these frail tenements on their branches, and shaded by the leaves. They often touched each other, a wonderful degree of order prevailing among the hundreds of thousands of families that were here assembled. The place had the odor of a fowl-house, and squabs, just fledged sufficiently to trust themselves in short flights, were fluttering around us in all directions, in tens of thousands. To these were to be added the parents of the young race endeavoring to protect them, and guide them in a way to escape harm. Although the birds rose as we approached, and the woods just around us seemed fairly alive with pigeons, our presence produced no general commotion; every one of the feathered throng appearing to be so much occupied with its own concerns as to take little heed of the visit of a party of strangers, though of a race usually so formidable to their own. The masses moved before us precisely as a crowd of human beings yields to a pressure or a danger on any given point; the vacuum created by its passage filling in its rear, as the water of the ocean flows into the track of the keel.

The effect on most of us was confounding, and I can only compare the sensation produced on myself by the extraor-

dinary tumult to that a man experiences at finding himself suddenly placed in the midst of an excited throng of human beings. The unnatural disregard of our persons manifested by the birds greatly heightened the effect, and caused me to feel as if some unearthly influence reigned in the place. It was strange, indeed, to be in a mob of the feathered race, that scarce exhibited a consciousness of one's presence. The pigeons seemed a world of themselves, and too much occupied with their own concerns to take heed of matters that lay beyond them.

Not one of our party spoke for several minutes. Astonishment seemed to hold us all tongue-tied, and we moved slowly forward into the fluttering throng, silent, absorbed, and full of admiration of the works of the Creator. It was not easy to hear each other's voices when we did speak, the incessant flutterings of wings filling the air. Nor were the birds silent in other respects. The pigeon is not a noisy creature, but a million crowded together on the summit of one hill, occupying a space of less than a mile square, did not leave the forest in its ordinary impressive stillness. As we advanced, I offered my arm, almost unconsciously, again to Dus, and she took it with the same abstracted manner as that in which it had been held forth for her acceptance. In this relation to each other, we continued to follow the grave-looking Onondago, as he moved still deeper and deeper into the midst of the fluttering tumult.

At this instant there occurred an interruption that, I am ready enough to confess, caused the blood to rush toward my own heart in a flood. As for Dus, she clung to me, as woman will cling to man, when he possesses her confidence, and she feels that she is insufficient for her own support. Both hands were on my arm, and I felt that, unconsciously, her form was pressing closer to mine, in a manner she would have carefully avoided in a moment of perfect self-possession. Nevertheless, I cannot say that Dus was afraid. Her color was heightened, her charming eyes were filled with a wonder that was not unmixed with curiosity, but her air was spirited in spite of a scene that might try the nerves of the boldest man. Sureflint and Chainbearer were alone totally

unmoved; for they had been at pigeons' roosts before, and knew what to expect. To them the wonders of the woods were no longer novel. Each stood leaning on his rifle, and smiling at our evident astonishment. I am wrong; the Indian did not even smile; for that would have been an unusual indication of feeling for him to manifest; but he did betray a sort of covert consciousness that the scene must be astounding to us. But I will endeavor to explain what it was that so largely increased the first effect of our visit.

While standing wondering at the extraordinary scene around us, a noise was heard rising above that of the incessant fluttering, which I can only liken to that of the trampling of thousands of horses on a beaten road. This noise at first sounded distant, but it increased rapidly in proximity and power, until it came rolling in upon us, among the tree-tops, like a crash of thunder. The air was suddenly darkened, and the place where we stood as sombre as a dusky twilight. At the same instant, all the pigeons near us, that had been on their nests, appeared to fall out of them, and the space immediately above our heads was at once filled with birds. Chaos itself could hardly have represented greater confusion, or a greater uproar. As for the birds, they now seemed to disregard our presence entirely; possibly they could not see us on account of their own numbers; for they fluttered in between Dus and myself, hitting us with their wings, and at times appearing as if about to bury us in avalanches of pigeons. Each of us caught one at least in our hands, while Chainbearer and the Indian took them in some numbers, letting one prisoner go as another was taken. In a word, we seemed to be in a world of pigeons. This part of the scene may have lasted a minute, when the space around us was suddenly cleared, the birds glancing upward among the branches of the trees, disappearing among the foliage. All this was the effect produced by the return of the female birds, which had been off at a distance, some twenty miles at least, to feed on beechnuts, and which now assumed the places of the males on the nests; the latter taking a flight to get their meal in their turn.

I have since had the curiosity to make a sort of an estimate of the number of the birds that must have come in upon the roost, in that, to us, memorable minute. Such a calculation, as a matter of course, must be very vague, though one may get certain principles by estimating the size of a flock by the known rapidity of the flight, and other similar means; and I remember that Frank Malbone and myself supposed that a million of birds must have come in on that return, and as many departed! As the pigeon is a very voracious bird, the question is apt to present itself, where food is obtained for so many mouths; but when we remember the vast extent of the American forests, this difficulty is at once met. Admitting that the colony we visited contained many millions of birds, and, counting old and young, I have no doubt it did, there was probably a fruit-bearing tree for each, within an hour's flight from that very spot!

Such is the scale on which nature labors in the wilderness! I have seen insects fluttering in the air at particular seasons, and at particular places, until they formed little clouds; a sight every one must have witnessed on many occasions; and as those insects appeared, on their diminished scale, so did the pigeons appear to us at the roost of Mooseridge. We passed an hour in the town of the birds, finding our tongues and our other faculties, as we became accustomed to our situation. In a short time, even Dus grew as composed as at all comported with the excitement natural to one in such a place; and we studied the habits of the pretty animals with a zest that I found so much the greater for studying them in her company. At the end of the hour we left the hill, our departure producing no more sensation in that countless tribe of pigeons than our arrival.

"It is a proof that numbers can change our natures," said Dus, as we descended the little mountain. "Here have we been almost in contact with pigeons which would not have suffered us to come within a hundred feet of them, had they been in ordinary flocks, or as single birds. Is it that numbers give them courage?"

"Confidence rather. It is just so with men, who will

exhibit an indifference in crowds that they rarely possess when alone. The sights, interruptions, and even dangers that will draw all our attention when with a few, often seem indifferent to us when in the tumult of a throng of fellow-creatures."

"What is meant by a panic in an army, then?"

"It is following the same law, making man subject to the impulses of those around him. If the impulse be onward, onward we go; if for retreat, we run like sheep. If occupied with ourselves as a body, we disregard trifling interruptions, as these pigeons have just done in our own case. Large bodies of animals, whether human or not, seem to become subject to certain general laws that increase the power of the whole over the acts and feelings of any one or any few of their number."

"According to that rule, our new republican form of government ought to be a very strong one; though I have heard many express their fears it will be no government at all."

"Unless a miracle be wrought in our behalf, it will be the strongest government in the world for certain purposes, and the weakest for others. It possesses a principle of self-preservation that is not enjoyed by other systems, since the people must revolt against themselves to overturn it; but on the other hand, it will want the active, living principle of steady, consistent justice, since there will be no independent power whose duty and whose interest it will be to see it administered. The wisest man I ever knew has prophesied to me that this is the point on which our system will break down; rendering the character, the person, and the property of the citizen insecure, and consequently the institutions odious to those who once have loved them."

"I trust there is no danger of that!" said Dus, quickly.

"There is danger from everything that man controls. We have those among us who preach the possible perfection of the human race, maintaining the gross delusion that men are what they are known to be, merely because they have been ill-governed; and a more dangerous theory, in my poor judgment, cannot be broached."

"You think, then, that the theory is false?"

"Beyond a question; governments are oftener spoiled by men, than men by governments; though the last certainly have a marked influence on character. The best government of which we know anything is that of the universe; and it is so, merely because it proceeds from a single will, that will being without blemish."

"Your despotic governments are said to be the very worst in the world."

"They are good or bad as they happen to be administered. The necessity of maintaining such governments by force renders them often oppressive; but a government of numbers may become more despotic than that of an individual; since the people will, in some mode or other, always sustain the oppressed as against the despot, but rarely, or never, as against themselves. You saw that those pigeons lost their instinct, under the impulse given them by numbers. God forever protect me against the tyranny of numbers."

"But everybody says our system is admirable, and the best in the world; and even a despot's government is the government of a man."

"It is one of the effects of numbers that men shrink from speaking the truth when they find themselves opposed to large majorities. As respects self-rule, the colonies were ever freer than the mother country; and we are, as yet, merely pursuing our ancient practices, substituting allegiance to the confederation for allegiance to the king. The difference is not sufficiently material to produce early changes. We are to wait until that which there is of new principles in our present system shall have time to work radical changes, when we shall begin to ascertain how much better we really are than our neighbors." [1]

[1] At the time of which Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage is here speaking, it was far less the fashion to extol the institutions than it is to-day. Men then openly wrote and spoke against them, while few dare, at the present time, point out faults that every person of intelligence knows and feels to be defects. A few years since, when Jackson was placed in the White House, it was the fashion of Europe to predict that we had elevated a soldier to power, and that the government of

Dus and I continued to converse on this subject until she got again into the saddle. I was delighted with her good sense and intelligence, which were made apparent more in the pertinacity of her questions than by any positive knowledge she had on such subjects, which usually have very few attractions for young women. Nevertheless, Dus had an activity of mind and a readiness of perception that supplied many of the deficiencies of education on these points; and I do not remember to have ever been engaged in a political discussion from which I derived so much satisfaction. I must own, however, it is possible that the golden hair flying about a face that was just as ruddy as comported with the delicacy of the sex, the rich mouth, the brilliant teeth, and the spirited and yet tender blue eyes, may have increased a wisdom that I found so remarkable.

the bayonet was at hand. This every intelligent American knew to be rank nonsense. The approach of the government of the bayonet among us, if it is ever to come, may be foreseen by the magnitude of popular abuses, against which force is the only remedy. Every well-wisher of the freedom this country has hitherto enjoyed should now look upon the popular tendencies with distrust, as, whenever it is taken away, it will go as their direct consequence; it being an inherent principle in the corrupt nature of man to misuse all his privileges; even those connected with religion itself. If history proves anything, it proves this.—EDITOR.

CHAPTER XV.

"Fie, fie, fond love, thou art so full of fear,
As one with treasure laden, hemmed with thieves;
Trifles, unwitnessèd with eye or ear,
Thy coward heart false bethinking grieves."
Venus and Adonis.

THE hut, or huts, of Chainbearer had far more comfort in and around them, than I was prepared to find. They were three in number, one having been erected as a kitchen, and a place to contain the male slaves; another for the special accommodation of Ursula and the female black; and the third to receive men. The eating-room was attached to the kitchen; and all these buildings, which had now stood the entire year, were constructed of logs, and were covered with bark. They were roughly made, as usual; but that appropriated to Dus was so much superior to the others in its arrangements, internal and external, as at once to denote the presence and the influence of woman. It may have some interest with the reader briefly to describe the place.

Quite as a matter of course, a spring had been found, as the first consideration in "locating," as it is called by that portion of our people who get upon their conversational stilts. The spring burst out of the side of a declivity, the land stretching away, for more than a mile from its foot, in an inclined plane that was densely covered with some of the noblest elms, beeches, maples, and black birches I have ever seen. This spot, the Chainbearer early assured me, was the most valuable of all the lands of Mooseridge. He had selected it because it was central, and particularly clear from underbrush; besides having no stagnant water near

it. In other respects, it was like any other point in that vast forest; being dark, shaded, and surrounded by the magnificence of a bountiful vegetation.

Here Chainbearer had erected his hut, a low, solid structure of pine logs, that were picturesque in appearance, and not without their rude comforts, in their several ways. These buildings were irregularly placed, though the spring was in their control. The kitchen and eating-room were nearest the water; at no great distance from these was the habitation of the men; while the smaller structure, which Frank Malbone laughingly termed the "harem," stood a little apart, on a slight spur of land, but within fifty yards of Andries' own lodgings. Boards had been cut by hand, for the floors and doors of these huts, though no building but the "harem" had any window that was glazed. This last had two such windows, Frank had even taken care to provide for his sister's dwelling rude but strong window-shutters.

As for defences against an enemy, they were no longer thought of within the limits of New York. Block-houses, and otherwise fortified dwellings, had been necessary so long as the French possessed Canada; but after the capture of that colony, few had deemed any such precautions called for, until the war of the Revolution brought a savage foe once more among the frontier settlements; frontier, as to civilization, if not as to territory. With the termination of that war had ceased this, the latest demand for provisions of that nature; and the Chainbearer had not thought of using any care to meet the emergencies of violence, in "making his pitch."

Nevertheless, each hut would have been a reasonably strong post, on an emergency; the logs being bullet-proof, and still remaining undecayed and compact. Palisades were not thought of now, nor was there any covered means of communicating between one hut and another. In a word, whatever there might be in the way of security, in these structures, was the result of the solidity of their material, and of the fashion of building that was then, and is still, customary everywhere in the forest. As against wild

beasts there was entire protection, and other enemies were no longer dreaded. Around the huts there were no inclosures of any sort, nor any other cleared land than a spot of about half an acre in extent, off of which had been cut the small pines that furnished the logs of which they were built. A few vegetables had been put into the ground at the most open point; but a fence being unnecessary, none had been built. As for the huts, they stood completely shaded by the forest, the pines having been cut on an eminence a hundred yards distant. This spot, however, small as it was, brought enough of the commoner sort of plants to furnish a frugal table.

Such was the spot that was then known in all that region by the name of the "Chainbearer's Huts." This name has been retained, and the huts are still standing, circumstances having rendered them memorable in my personal history and caused me to direct their preservation, at least as long as I shall live. As the place had been inhabited a considerable time that spring and summer, it bore some of the other signs of the presence of man; but on the whole, its character as a residence was that of deep forest seclusion. In point of fact, it stood buried in the woods, distant fully fifteen miles from the nearest known habitation, and in so much removed from the comfort, succor, and outward communications of civilized life. These isolated abodes, however, are by no means uncommon in the State, even at the present hour; and it is probable that some of them will be found during the whole of this century. It is true that the western, middle, southern, southwestern, northwestern, and northeastern counties of New York, all of which were wild, or nearly so, at the time of which I am writing, are already well settled, or are fast filling up; but there is a high, mountainous region, in middle-northern New York, which will remain virtually a wilderness, I should think for quite a century, if not longer. I have travelled through this district of wilderness very lately, and have found it picturesque and well suited for the sportsman, abounding in deer, fish, and forest birds, but not so much suited to the commoner wants of man as to bring it very soon into demand for the

ordinary purposes of the husbandman. If this quarter of the country do not fall into the hands of lawless squatters and plunderers of one sort and another, of which there is always some danger in a country of so great extent, it will become a very pleasant resort of the sportsman, who is likely to soon lose his haunts in the other quarters of the State.

Jaap had brought over some horses of mine from the 'Nest as sumpter-beasts, and these being sent back for want of provender, the negro himself remained at the "Huts" as a general assistant, and as a sort of hunter. A Westchester negro is pretty certain to be a shot, especially if he happen to belong to the proprietor of a Neck; for there is no jealousy of trusting arms in the hands of our New York slaves. But Jaap having served, in a manner, was entitled to burn as much gunpowder as he pleased. By means of one of his warlike exploits, the old fellow had become possessed of a very capital fowling-piece, plunder obtained from some slain English officer, I always supposed; and this arm he invariably kept near his person, as a trophy of his own success. The shooting of Westchester, however, and that of the forest, were very different branches of the same art. Jaap belonged to the school of the former, in which the pointer and setter were used. The game was "put up," and "marked down," and the bird was invariably shot on the wing. My attention was early called to this distinction, by overhearing a conversation between the negro and the Indian, that took place within a few minutes after our arrival, and a portion of which I shall now proceed to relate.

Jaap and Sureflint were, in point of fact, very old acquaintances, and fast friends. They had been actors in certain memorable scenes, on those very lands of Mooseridge, some time before my birth, and had often met and served as comrades during the last war. The known antipathy between the races of the red and black men did not exist as between them, though the negro regarded the Indian with some of that self-sufficiency which the domestic servant would be apt to entertain for a savage roamer of

the forest; while the Onondago could not but look on my fellow as one of the freest of the free would naturally feel disposed to look on one who was content to live in bondage. These feelings were rather mitigated than extinguished by their friendship, and often made themselves manifest in the course of their daily communion with each other.

A bag filled with squabs had been brought from the roost, and Jaap had emptied it of its contents on the ground near the kitchen, to commence the necessary operations of picking and cleaning, preparatory to handing the birds over to the cook. As for the Onondago, he took his seat near by on a log very coolly, a spectator of his companion's labors, but disdaining to enter in person on such woman's work, now that he was neither on a message nor on a war-path. Necessity alone could induce him to submit to any menial labor, nor do I believe he would have offered to assist, had he seen the fair hands of Dus herself plucking these pigeons. To him it would have been perfectly suitable that a "squaw" should do the work of a "squaw," while a warrior maintained his dignified idleness. Systematic and intelligent industry are the attendants of civilization, the wants created by which can only be supplied by the unremitted care of those who live by their existence.

"Dere, old Sus," exclaimed the negro, shaking the last of the dead birds from the bag,—"dere, now, Injin; I s'pose you t'inks 'em ere 's game!"

"What you call him, eh?" demanded the Onondago, eying the negro sharply.

"I does n't call 'em game a bit, redskin. Dem 's not varmint, n'oder; but den, dem is n't game. Game 's game, I s'pose you does know, Sus?"

"Game, game—good! T'at true—who say no?"

"Yes, it 's easy enough to say a t'ing, but it not so berry easy to understan'. Can any Injin in York State, now, tell me why pigeon is n't game?"

"Pigeon game—good game, too. Eat sweet; many time want more."

"Now, I do s'pose, Trackless,"—Jaap loved to run through the whole vocabulary of the Onondago's names,—

"now, I do s'pose, Trackless, you t'ink tame pigeon just as good as wild?"

"Don't know; nebber eat tame—s'pose him good, too,"

"Well, den, you s'poses berry wrong. Tame pigeons poor stuff; but no pigeon be game. Nuttin' game, Sureflint, dat a dog won't p'int, or set. Massa Mordaunt h'an't got no dog at de 'Bush or de 'Toe, and he keeps dogs enough at bot', dat would p'int a pigeon."

"P'int deer, eh?"

"Well, I does n't know. P'raps he will, p'raps he won't. Dere is n't no deer in Westchester for us to try de dogs on, so a body can't tell. You remem'er 'e day, Sus, when we fit your redskins out here, 'long time ago, wit' Massa Corny and Massa Ten Eyck, and ole Massa Herman Mordaunt, and Miss Anneke, and Miss Mary, an' your frin' Jumper? You remem'er dat, ha! Onondago?"

"Sartain—no forget; Injin nebber forget. Don't forget friend—don't forget enemy."

Here Jaap raised one of his shouting negro laughs, in which all the joyousness of his nature seemed to enter with as much zest as if he were subjected to a sort of mental tickling; then he let the character of his merriment be seen by his answer.

"Sartain 'nough—you remem'er dat feller, Muss, Trackless? He get heself in a muss by habbing too much mem'ry. Good to hab mem'ry when you told to do work; but sometime mem'ry bad 'nough. Berry bad to hab so much mem'ry dat he can't forget small floggin'."

"No true," answered the Onondago, a little sternly, though a very little; for, while he and Jaap disputed daily, they never quarrelled—"no true, so. Flog bad for back."

"Well, dat because you redskin; a color' man don't mind him as much as dis squab. Get use to him in little while; den he nuttin' to speak of."

Sureflint made no answer, but he looked as if he pitied the ignorance, humility, and condition of his friend.

"What you t'ink of dis worl', Susquesus?" suddenly demanded the negro, tossing a squab that he had cleaned into a pail, and taking another. "How you t'ink white man

come?—how you t'ink redman come?—how you t'ink color' gentl'em come, eh?"

"Great Spirit say so—t'en all come. Fill Injin full of blood—t'at make him red; fill nigger wit' ink—t'at make him black; pale-face pale 'cause he live in sun, and color dry out."

Here Jaap laughed so loud, that he drew all three of Chainbearer's blacks to the door, who joined in the fun out of pure sympathy, though they could not have known its cause. Those blacks! They may be very miserable as slaves; but it is certain no other class in America laugh so often, or so easily, or one half as heartily.

"Harkee, Injin," resumed Jaap, as soon as he had laughed as much as he wished to do at that particular moment,—"harkee, Injin! you t'ink 'arth round, or 'arth flat?"

"How do you mean?—'arth up and down—no round—no flat."

"Dat not what I mean. Bot' up and down in one sens', but no up and down in 'noder. Massa Mordaunt, now, and Massa Corny too, bot' say 'arth round like an apple, and dat he 'd stand one way in day-time, an' 'noder way in night-time. Now, what you t'ink of dat, Injin?"

The Trackless listened gravely, but he expressed neither assent nor dissent. I knew he had a respect for both my father and myself; but it was asking a great deal of him to credit that the world was round; nor did he understand how one could be turned over in the manner Jaap pretended.

"S'pose it so," he remarked, after a pause of reflection—"s'pose it so, den man stand upside down? Man stand on foot; no stand on head."

"Worl' turn round, Injin; dat a reason why you stand on he head one time; on he foot 'noder."

"Who tell t'at tradition, Jaap? Nebber heard him afore."

"Massa Corny tell me dat, long time ago; when I war' little boy. Ask Massa Mordaunt one day, and he tell you a same story. Ebberybody say dat but Massa Dirck Follock; and he say to me, one time, 'It true, Jaap, t'e book do say so—and your Massa Corny believe him; but I want to see t'e worl' turn round, afore I b'lieve it.' Dat

what Colonel Follock say, Trackless; you know he berry honest."

"Good—honest man, colonel—brave warrior—true friend; b'lieve all he tell, when he know; but don't know ebbery-t'ing. Gen'ral know more—major young, but know more."

Perhaps my modesty ought to cause me to hesitate about recording that which the partiality of so good a friend as Susquesus might induce him to say; but it is my wish to be particular, and to relate all that passed on this occasion. Jaap could not object to the Indian's proposition, for he had too much love and attachment for his two masters not to admit at once that they knew more than Colonel Follock; no very extravagant assumption, by the way.

"Yes, he good 'nough," answered the black, "but he don't know half as much as Massa Corny, or Massa Mordaunt. He say worl' is n't round; now, I t'ink he look round."

"What Chainbearer say?" asked the Indian, suddenly, as if he had determined that his own opinion should be governed by that of a man whom he so well loved. "Chainbearer nebber lie."

"Nor do Massa Corny, nor Massa Mordaunt!" exclaimed Jaap, a little indignantly. "You t'ink, Trackless, e'der of my massas lie!"

That was an accusation that Susquesus never intended to make; though his greater intimacy with, and greater reliance on old Andries had, naturally enough, induced him to ask the question he had put.

"No say e'der lie," answered the Onondago; "but many forked tongue about, and maybe hear so, and t'ink so. Chainbearer stop ear; nebber listen to crooked tongue."

"Well, here come Chainbearer he self, Sus; so, jist for graterfercashun, you shall hear what 'e ole man say. It berry true, Chainbearer honest man, and I like to know he opinion myself, sin' it is n't easy, Trackless, to understan' how a mortal being can stan' up, head down!"

"What 'mortal being' mean, eh?"

"Why, it mean mortality, Injin—you, mortality—I mortality—Massa Corny, mortality—Massa Mordaunt,

mortality—Miss Anneke, mortality—ebberybody, mortality; but ebberybody not 'e same sort of mortality! Understan' now, Sus?"

The Indian shook his head, and looked perplexed; but the Chainbearer coming up at that moment, that branch of the matter in discussion was pursued no further. After exchanging a few remarks about the pigeons, Jaap did not scruple to redeem the pledge he had given his red friend, by plunging at once into the main subject with the Chainbearer.

"You know how it be wid Injin, Massa Chainbearer," said Jaap; "'ey is always poor missedercated creatur's, and knows nuttin' but what come by chance; now here be Sureflint, he can no way t'ink dis worl' round; and dat it turn round, too; and so he want me to ask what you got to say about dat matter?"

Chainbearer was no scholar. Whatever may be said of Leyden, and of the many, very many learned Dutchmen it had sent forth into the world, few of them ever reached America. Our brethren of the eastern colonies, now States, had long been remarkable, as a whole, for that "dangerous thing," a "little learning"; but I cannot say that the Dutch of New York, also viewed as a whole, incurred any of those risks. To own the truth, it was not a very easy matter to be more profoundly ignorant, on all things connected with science, than were the mass of the uneducated Dutch of New York, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four. It made little difference as to condition in life, unless one rose as high as the old colonial aristocracy of that stock, and an occasional exception in favor of a family that intended to rear, or had reared, in its bosom a minister of the gospel. Such was the strength of the prejudice among these people, that they distrusted the English schools, and few permitted their children to enter them; while those they possessed of their own were ordinarily of a very low character. These feelings were giving way before the influence of time, it is true, but it was very slowly, and it was pretty safe to infer that every man of low Dutch extraction in the colony was virtually uneducated, with the

exception of here and there an individual of the higher social castes, or one that had been especially favored by association and circumstances. As for that flippant knowledge, of which our Eastern neighbors possessed so large an amount, the New York Dutch appeared to view it with peculiar dislike, disdaining to know anything, if it were not of the very best quality. Still, there were a few to whom this quality was by no means a stranger. In these isolated cases, the unwearied application, painstaking industry, cautious appreciation of facts, and solid judgment of the parties, had produced a few men, who only required a theatre for its exhibition, in order to cause their information to command the profound respect of the learned, let them live where they might. What they did acquire was thoroughly got, though seldom paraded for the purposes of mere show.

Old Andries, however, was not of the class just named. He belonged to the rule, and not to its exception. Beyond a question, he had heard all the more familiar truths of science alluded to in discourse, or had seen them in the pages of books; but they entered into no part of his real opinions; for he was not sufficiently familiar with the different subjects to feel their truths in a way to incorporate them with his mind.

"You know 'tis sait, Jaap," Chainbearer answered, "t'at bot' are true. Eferypoty wilt tell you so; and all t'e folks I haf seen holt t'e same opinions."

"T'ink him true, Chainbearer?" the Onondago somewhat abruptly demanded.

"I s'pose I must, Sureflint, since all say it. T'e palefaces, you know, reat a great many pooks, ant get to pe much wiser t'ant retmen."

"How you make man stan' on head, eh?"

Chainbearer now looked over one shoulder, then over the other; and fancying no one was near but the two in his front, he was probably a little more communicative than might otherwise have been the case. Drawing a little nearer, like one who is about to deal with a secret, the honest old man made his reply.

"To pe frank wit' you, Sureflint," he answered, "t'at ist a question not easily answered. Eferypoty says 't is so, ant, t'erefore, I s'pose it must pe so; but I haf often asked myself, If t'is worlt pe truly turned upsite town at night, now is it, olt Chainpearer, t'at you ton't roll out of pet? T'ere 's t'ings in natur' t'at are incomprehensiple, Trackless; quite incomprehensiple!"

The Indian listened gravely, and it seemed to satisfy his longings on the subject, to know that there were things in nature that are incomprehensible. As for the Chainbearer, I thought that he changed the discourse a little suddenly on account of these very incomprehensible things in nature; for it is certain he broke off on another theme, in a way to alter all the ideas of his companions, let them be on their heads or their heels.

"Is it not true, Jaap, t'at you ant t'e Onondago, here, wast pot' present at t'e Injin massacre t'at took place in t'ese parts, pefore t'e Revolution, in t'e olt French war? I mean t'e time when one Traverse, a surveyor, ant a fery goot surveyor he was, was kil't, wit all his chainpearers ant axe-men?"

"True as gospel, Massa Andries," returned the negro, looking up seriously, and shaking his head; "I was here, and so was Sus. Dat was de fuss time we smell gunpowder togedder. De French Injins was out in droves, and dey cut off Massa Traverse and all his party, not leaving half a scalp on a single head. Yes, sah; I remember dat, as if 't was last night."

"Ant what was tone wit' t'e poties? You puriet t'e poties, surely?"

"Sartain; Pete, Massa Ten Eyck's man, was put into a hole, near Massa Corny's hut, which must be out here, four or five miles off; while Massa Surveyor and his men were buried by a spring, somewhere off yonder. Am I right, Injin?"

The Onondago shook his head; then he pointed to the true direction to each spot that had been mentioned, showing that Jaap was very much out of the way. I had heard of certain adventures in which my father had been concerned

when a young man, and in which, indeed, my mother had been in a degree an actor, but I did not know enough of the events fully to comprehend the discourse which succeeded. It seemed that the Chainbearer knew the occurrences by report only, not having been present at the scenes connected with them; but he felt a strong desire to visit the graves of the sufferers. As yet, he had not even visited the hut of Mr. Traverse, the surveyor who had been killed; for the work on which he had been employed being one of detail, or that of subdividing the great lots laid down before the Revolution, into smaller lots, for present sale, it had not taken him as yet from the central point where it had commenced. His new assistant chainbearer was not expected to join us for a day or two; and, after talking the matter over with his two companions for a few minutes, he announced a determination to go in quest of all the graves the succeeding morning, with the intention of having suitable memorials of their existence placed over them.

The evening of that day was calm and delightful. As the sun was setting I paid Dus a visit, and found her alone in what she playfully called the drawing-room of her "harem." Luckily there were no mutes to prevent my entrance, the usual black guardian, of whom there was one, being still in her kitchen at work. I was received without embarrassment, and taking a seat on the threshold of the door, I sat conversing, while the mistress of the place plied her needle on a low chair within. For a time we talked of the pigeons and of our little journey in the woods; after which the conversation insensibly took a direction toward our present situation, the past, and the future. I had adverted to the Chainbearer's resolution to search for the graves; and, at this point, I shall begin to record what was said, as it was said.

"I have heard allusions to those melancholy events, rather than their history," I added. "For some cause neither of my parents like to speak of them; though I know not the reason."

"Their history is well known at Ravensnest," answered Dus; "and it is often related there at least, as marvels are

usually related in country settlements. I suppose there is a grain of truth mixed up with a pound of error."

"I see no reason for misrepresenting in an affair of that sort."

"There is no other than the universal love of the marvellous, which causes most people to insist on having it introduced into a story, if it do not happen to come in legitimately. Your true country gossip is never satisfied with fact. He (or she would be the better word) insists on exercising a dull imagination at invention. In this case, however, from all I can learn, more fact and less invention has been used than common."

We then spoke of the outlines of the story each had heard, and we found that, in the main, our tales agreed. In making the comparison, however, I found that I was disposed to dwell most on the horrible features of the incidents, while Dus, gently and almost insensibly, yet infallibly, inclined to those that were gentler, and which had more connection with the affections.

"Your account is much as mine, and both must be true in the main, as you got yours from the principal actors," she said; "but our gossips relate certain points connected with love and marriage, about which you have been silent."

"Let me hear them, then," I cried; "for I never was in a better mood to converse of love and marriage," laying a strong emphasis on the last word, "than at this moment!"

The girl started, blushed, compressed her lips, and continued silent for half a minute. I could see that her hand trembled, but she was too much accustomed to extraordinary situations easily to lose her self-command. It was nearly dusk, too, and the obscurity in which she sat within the hut, which was itself beneath the shade of tall trees, most probably aided her efforts to seem unconscious. Yet I had spoken warmly, and as I soon saw, in a manner that demanded explanation, though at the moment quite without plan, and scarcely with the consciousness of what I was doing. I decided not to retreat, but to go on, in doing which I should merely obey an impulse that was getting to be too

strong for much further restraint; that was not the precise moment, nevertheless, in which I was resolved to speak, but I waited rather for the natural course of things. In the meantime, after the short silence mentioned, the discourse continued.

"All I meant," resumed Dus, "was the tradition which is related among your tenants, that your parents were united in consequence of the manner in which your father defended Herman Mordaunt's dwelling, his daughter included—though Herman Mordaunt himself preferred some English lord for his son-in-law, and—but I ought to repeat no more of this silly tale."

"Let me hear it all, though it be the loves of my own parents."

"I dare say it is not true; for what vulgar report of private feelings and private acts ever is so? My tradition added, that Miss Mordaunt was, at first, captivated by the brilliant qualities of the young lord, though she much preferred General Littlepage in the end, and that her marriage has been most happy."

"Your tradition, then, has not done my mother justice, but is faulty in many things. Your young lord was merely a baronet's heir; and I know from my dear grandmother that my mother's attachment to my father commenced when she was a mere child, and was the consequence of his resenting an insult she received at the time from some other boy."

"I am glad of that!" exclaimed Dus, with an emphasis so marked, that I was surprised at the earnestness of her manner. "Second attachments in woman to me always seem misplaced. There was another vein to my tradition which tells of a lady who lost her betrothed the night the 'Nest was assailed, and who has ever since lived unmarried, true to his memory. That is a part of the story I have ever loved!"

"Was her name Wallace?" I asked eagerly.

"It was; Mary Wallace—and I have honored the name ever since I heard the circumstances. In my eyes, Mr. Littlepage, there can be no picture more respectable than that

of a female remaining true to her first attachments, under all circumstances; in death, as well as in life."

"Or in mine, beloved Ursula!" I cried—but I will not make a fool of myself, by attempting to record what I said next. The fact was, that Dus had been winding herself round my heart for the last few weeks in a way that would have defied any attempts of mine to extricate it from the net into which it had fallen, had I the wish to do so. But I had considered the matter, and saw no reason to desire freedom from the dominion of Ursula Malbone. To me, she appeared all that man could wish, and I saw no impediment to a union in the circumstance of her poverty. Her family and education were quite equal to my own; and these very important considerations admitted, I had fortune enough for both. It was material that we should have the habits, opinions, prejudices if you will, of the same social caste; but beyond this, worldly considerations, in my view of the matter, ought to have no influence.

Under such notions, therefore, and guided by the strong impulse of a generous and manly passion, I poured out my whole soul to Dus. I dare say I spoke a quarter of an hour without being once interrupted. I did not wish to hear my companion's voice; for I had the humility which is said to be the inseparable attendant of a true love, and was fearful that the answer might not be such as I could wish to hear. I could perceive, spite of the increasing obscurity, that Dus was strongly agitated; and will confess a lively hope was created within me by this circumstance. Thus encouraged, it was natural to lose my fears in the wish to be more assured; and I now pressed for a reply. After a brief pause, I obtained it in the following words, which were uttered with a tremor and sensibility that gave them tenfold weight.

"For this unexpected, and I believe sincere declaration, Mr. Littlepage, I thank you from the bottom of my heart," the precious creature commenced. "There are a frankness, an honorable sincerity, and a noble generosity in such a declaration, coming from you to me, that can never be forgotten. But, I am not my own mistress—my faith is plighted to another—my affections are with my faith; and I cannot

accept offers which, so truly generous, so truly noble, demand the most explicit reply—"

I heard no more; for, springing from the floor, and an attitude that was very nearly that of being on my knees, I rushed from the hut and plunged into the forest.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Ye boys who pluck the flowers, and spoil the spring,
Beware the secret snake that shoots a sting."

DRYDEN'S *Eclogues.*

FOR the first half hour after I left Ursula Malbone's hut, I was literally unconscious of whither I was going, or of what I was about. I can recollect nothing but having passed quite near to the Onondago, who appeared desirous of speaking to me, but whom I avoided by a species of instinct rather than with any design. In fact, fatigue first brought me fairly to my senses. I had wandered miles and miles, plunging deeper and deeper into the wilds of the forest, and this without any aim, or any knowledge of even the direction in which I was going. Night soon came to cast its shadows on the earth, and my uncertain course was held amid the gloom of the hour, united to those of the woods. I had wearied myself by rapid walking over the uneven surface of the forest, and finally threw myself on the trunk of a fallen tree, willing to take some repose.

At first I thought of nothing, felt for nothing, but the unwelcome circumstance that the faith of Dus was plighted to another. Had I fallen in love with Priscilla Bayard, such an announcement could not have occasioned the same surprise; for she lived in the world, met with men of suitable educations, conditions, and opinions, and might be supposed to have been brought within the influence of the attentions and sympathies that are wont to awaken tenderness in the female breast. With Dus, it had been very different: she had gone from the forest to the school, and returned from

the school to the forest. It was true that her brother, while a soldier, might have had some friend who admired Ursula, and whose admiration awakened her youthful sympathies, but this was only a remote probability, and I was left burdened with a load of doubt as respected even the character and position of my rival.

"At any rate, he must be poor," I said to myself, the moment I was capable of reflecting coolly on the subject, "or he would never have left Dus in that hut, to pass her youth amid chainbearers and the other rude beings of a frontier. If I cannot obtain her love, I may at least contribute to her happiness by using those means which a kind Providence has bestowed, and enabling her to marry at once." For a little while I fancied my own misery would be lessened, could I only see Dus married and happy. This feeling did not last long, however; though I trust the desire to see her happy remained after I became keenly conscious it would require much time to enable me to look on such a spectacle with composure. Nevertheless, the first tranquil moment, the first relieving sensation I experienced, was from the conviction I felt that Providence had placed it in my power to cause Ursula and the man of her choice to be united. This recollection gave me even a positive pleasure for a little while, and I ruminated on the means of effecting it, literally for hours. I was still thinking of it, indeed, when I threw myself on the fallen tree, where weariness caused me to fall into a troubled sleep, that lasted, with more or less of forgetfulness, several hours. The place I had chosen on the tree was among its branches, on which the leaves were still hanging, and it was not without its conveniences.

When I awoke, it was daylight; or such a daylight as penetrates the forest ere the sun has risen. At first I felt stiff and sore from the hardness of my bed; but on changing my attitude and sitting up, these sensations soon wore off, leaving me refreshed and calm. To my great surprise, however, I found that a small, light blanket, such as woodmen use in summer, had been thrown over me, to the genial warmth of which I was probably indebted more than I then

knew myself. This circumstance alarmed me at first, since it was obvious the blanket could not have come there without hands; though a moment's reflection satisfied me that the throwing it over me, under the circumstances, must have been the act of a friend. I arose, however, to my feet, walked along the trunk of the tree until clear of its branches, and looked about me with a lively desire to ascertain who this secret friend might be.

The place was like any other in the solitude of the forest. There were the usual array of the trunks of stately trees, the leafy canopy, the dark shadows, the long vistas, the brown and broken surface of the earth, and the damp coolness of the boundless woods. A fine spring broke out of a hill-side quite near me, and looking further, with the intention to approach and use its water, the mystery of the blanket was at once explained. I saw the form of the Onondago, motionless as one of the trees which grew around him, leaning on his rifle, and seemingly gazing at some object that lay at his feet. In a minute I was at his side, when I discovered that he was standing over a human skeleton! This was a strange and startling object to meet in the depth of the woods! Man was of so little account, was so seldom seen in the virgin wilds of America, that one naturally felt more shocked at finding such a memorial of his presence in a place like that, than would have been the case had he stumbled on it amid peopled districts. As for the Indian, he gazed at the bones so intently that he either did not hear, or he totally disregarded my approach. I touched him with a finger before he even looked up. Glad of any excuse to avoid explanation of my own conduct, I eagerly seized the occasion offered by a sight so unusual, to speak of other things.

"This has been a violent death, Sureflint," I said; "else the body would not have been left unburied. The man has been killed in some quarrel of the red warriors."

"Was bury," answered the Indian, without manifesting the least surprise at my touch, or at the sound of my voice. "Dere, see grave? 'Arth wash away, and bones come

out. Nuttin' else. Know he bury, for help bury, myself."

"Do you, then, know anything of this unhappy man, and of the cause of his death?"

"Sartain; know all 'bout him. Kill in ole French war. Fader here; and Colonel Follock; Jaap, too. Huron kill 'em all; afterward we flog Huron. Yes, dat ole story now!"

"I have heard something of this. This must have been the spot, then, where one Traverse, a surveyor, was set upon by the enemy, and was slain, with his chainbearers and axe-men. My father and his friends did find the bodies and bury them, after a fashion."

"Sartain; just so; poor bury, dough, else he nebber come out of groun'. Dese bones of surveyor; know 'em well: hab one leg broke, once. Dere; you see mark."

"Shall we dig a new grave, Susquesus, and bury the remains again?"

"Best not, now. Chainbearer mean do dat. Be here by'm-by. Got somt'ing else t'ink of now. You own all land 'bout here, so no need be in a hurry."

"I suppose that my father and Colonel Follock do. These men were slain on the estate, while running out its great lots. I think I have heard they had not near finished their work in this part of the patent, which was abandoned on account of the troubles of that day."

"Just so; who own mill, here, den?"

"There is no mill near us, Susquesus; can be no mill, as not an acre of the 'Ridge property has ever been sold or leased."

"May be so—mill dough—not far off, neider. Know mill when hear him. Saw talk loud."

"You surely do not hear the saw of a mill now, my friend. I can hear nothing like one."

"No hear, now; dat true. But hear him in night. Ear good in night—hear great way off."

"You are right enough there, Susquesus. And you fancied you heard the stroke of a saw, from this place, during the quiet and heavy air of the past night?"

"Sartain—know well; hear him plain enough. Is n't mile off. Out here; find him dere."

This was still more startling than the discovery of the skeleton. I had a rough, general map of the patent in my pocket; and on examination, I found a mill-stream was laid down on it, quite near the spot where we stood. The appearance of the woods, and the formation of the land, moreover, favored the idea of the proximity of a mill. Pine was plenty, and the hills were beginning to swell into something resembling mountains.

Fasting, and the exercise I had taken, had given me a keen appetite; and in one sense, at least, I was not sorry to believe that human habitations were near. Did any person dwell in that forest, they were squatters, but I did not feel much personal apprehension in encountering such men; especially when my only present object was to ask for food. The erecting of a mill denoted a decided demonstration, it is true, but a little reflection might have told me that its occupants would not be delighted by a sudden visit from the representative of the owners of the soil. On the other hand, however, the huts were long miles away, and neither Sureflint nor I had the smallest article of food about us. Both were hungry, though the Onondago professed indifference to the feeling, an unconcern I could not share with him, owing to habits of greater self-indulgence. Then I had a strong wish to solve this mystery of the mill, in addition to a feverish desire to awaken within me some new excitement, as a counterpoise to that I still keenly felt in behalf of my disappointed love.

Did I not so well understand the character of my companion, and the great accuracy of Indian senses, I might have hesitated about going on what seemed to be a fool's errand. But circumstances that were then of recent origin existed to give some countenance to the conjecture of Sureflint, if conjecture his precise knowledge could be called. Originally, New York claimed the Connecticut for a part of its eastern boundary, but large bodies of settlers had crossed that stream, coming mainly from the adjacent colony of New Hampshire, and these persons had become for-

midable by their positions and numbers, some time anterior to the Revolution. During that struggle, these hardy mountaineers had manifested a spirit favorable to the colonies, in the main, though every indication of an intention to settle their claims was met by a disposition to declare themselves neutral. In a word, they were sufficiently patriotic, if left to do as they pleased in the matter of their possessions, but not sufficiently so to submit to the regular administration of the law. About the close of the war, the leaders of this self-created colony were more than suspected of coquetting with the English authorities; not that they preferred the government of the crown, or any other control, to their own, but because the times were favorable to playing off their neutrality, in this manner, as a means of securing themselves in the possession of lands to which their titles, in the ordinary way, admitted of a good deal of dispute, to say the least. The difficulty was by no means disposed of by the peace of '83; but the counties that were then equally known by the name of Vermont and that of the Hampshire Grants, were existing, in one sense, as a people apart, not yet acknowledging the power of the confederacy; nor did they come into the Union, under the constitution of 1789, until all around them had done so, and the last spark of opposition to the new system had been extinguished.

It is the principle of moral, as well as of physical nature, that like should produce like. The right ever vindicates itself, in the process of events, and the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generations, in their melancholy consequences. It was impossible that an example of such a wrong could be successfully exhibited on a large scale, without producing its deluded imitators, on another that was better suited to the rapacity of individual longings. It is probable Vermont has sent out, among us, two squatters, and otherwise lawless intruders on our vacant lands, to one of any other of the adjoining States, counting all in proportion to their whole numbers. I knew that the county of Charlotte, as Washington was then called, was peculiarly exposed to in-

roads of this nature; and did not feel much surprise at this prospect of meeting with some of the fruits of the seed that had been so profusely scattered along the sides of the Green Mountains. Come what would, however, I was determined to ascertain the facts, as soon as possible, with the double purpose of satisfying both hunger and curiosity. As for the Indian, he was passive, yielding to my decision altogether as a matter of course.

"Since you think there is a mill, out here, west of us, Sureflint," I observed, after turning the matter over in my mind, "I will go and search for it, if you will bear me company. You think you can find it, I trust, knowing the direction in which it stands?"

"Sartain—find him easy 'nough. Find stream first—den find mill. Got ear—got eye—no hard to find him. Hear saw 'fore great while."

I acquiesced, and made a sign for my companion to proceed. Susquesus was a man of action, and not of words; and in a minute he was leading the way toward a spot in the woods that looked as if it might contain the bed of the stream that was known to exist somewhere near by, since it was laid down on the map.

The sort of instinct possessed by the Trackless enabled him soon to find this little river. It was full of water, and had a gentle current; a fact that the Indian immediately interpreted into a sign that the mill must be above us, since the dam would have checked the course of the water, had we been above that. Turning up-stream, then, my companion moved on, with the same silent industry as he would have trotted along the path that led to his own wigwam, had he been near it.

We had not been on the banks of the stream five minutes, before the Trackless came to a dead halt, like one who had met an unexpected obstacle. I was soon at his side, curious to know the motive of this delay.

"Soon see mill, now," Susquesus said, in answer to an inquiry of mine. "Board plenty—come down-stream fast as want him."

Sure enough, boards were coming down, in the current of

the river, much faster than one who was interested in the property would be apt to wish; unless, indeed, he felt certain of obtaining his share of the amount of sales. These boards were neither in rafts, nor in cribs; but they came singly, or two or three laid together, as if some arrangement had been made to arrest them below, before they should reach any shoals, falls, or rapids. All this looked surprisingly like a regular manufacture of lumber, with a view to sales in the markets of the towns on the Hudson. The little stream we were on was a tributary of that noble river, and, once in the latter, there would be no very material physical obstacle to conveying the product of our hills over the habitable globe.

"This really looks like trade, Sureflint," I said, as soon as certain that my eyes did not deceive me. "Where there are boards made, men cannot be far off. Lumber, cut to order, does not grow in the wilderness, though the material of which it is made may."

"Mill make him. Know'd mill, when hear him. Talk plain 'nough. Pale-face make mill, but redman got ear to hear wit'!"

"This was all true enough; and it remained to ascertain what was to come of it. I will acknowledge that, when I saw those tell-tale boards come floating down the winding little river, I felt a thrilling of the nerves, as if assured the sight would be succeeded by some occurrence of importance to myself. I knew that these lawless lumbermen bore a bad name in the land, and that they were generally regarded as a set of plunderers, who did not hesitate to defend themselves and their habits, by such acts of violence and fraud as they fancied their circumstances justified. It is one evil of crime, where it penetrates masses, that numbers are enabled to give it a gloss, and a seeming merit, that unsettle principles; rendering the false true, in the eyes of the ignorant, and generally placing evil before good. This is one of the modes in which justice vindicates itself, under the providence of God; the wrongs committed by communities reacting on themselves, in the shape of a demoralization that soon brings its own merited punishment.

There was little time for speculation or conjecture, however; for, resuming our march, the next bend in the river brought into view a reach of the stream in which half a dozen men and lads were at work in the water, placing the boards in piles of two or three, and setting them in the current, at points favorable to their floating downward. Booms, connected with chains, kept the confused pile in a sort of basin beneath some low cliffs, on the margin of which stood the expected saw-mill itself. Here, then, was ocular proof that squatters were systematically at work, plundering the forests of which I was in charge, of their most valuable trees, and setting everything like law and right at defiance. The circumstances called for great decision, united with the utmost circumspection. I had gone so far that pride would not suffer me to retreat, had not a sense of duty to my father and Colonel Follock come to increase the determination to go on.

The reader may feel some desire to know how far Dus mingled with my thoughts, all this time. She was never absolutely out of them, though the repulse I had met in my affections gave an impetus to my feelings that rendered me more than usually disposed to enter on an adventure of hazard and wildness. If I were naught to Ursula Malbone, it mattered little what else became of me. This was the sentiment that was uppermost, and I have thought ever since, that Susquesus had some insight into the condition of my feelings, and understood the cause of the sort of desperation with which I was about to rush on danger. We were, as yet, quite concealed, ourselves; and the Indian profited by the circumstance, to hold a council, before we trusted our persons in the hands of those who might feel it to be to their interest to make away with us, in preference to permitting us ever to see our friends again. In doing this, however, Sureflint was in no degree influenced by concern for himself, but solely by a desire to act as became an experienced warrior, on a very difficult warpath.

"S'pose you know," said Sureflint. "'Em no good men —Varmount squatter—you t'ink own land—dey t'ink own land. Carry rifle and do as please. Best watch him."

"I believe I understand you, Susquesus, and I shall be on my guard, accordingly. Did you ever see either of those men before?"

"T'ink have. Must meet all sort of men, when he go up and down in 'e wood. Despret squatter, dat ole man, out yonder. Call himself T'ousandacre—say he alway own t'ousand acre when he have mind to find him."

"The gentleman must be well provided with estates! A thousand acres will make a very pretty homestead for a wanderer, especially when he has the privilege of carrying it about with him in his travels. You mean the man with gray hairs, I suppose—he who is half dressed in buckskin?"

"Sartain; dat ole T'ousandacre—nebber want land—take him where he find him. Born over by great salt lake, he say, and been travel toward setting sun since a boy. Alway help himself—Hampshire Grant man, dat. But, major, why he no got right, well as you?"

"Because our laws give him no right, while they give to the owner in fee a perfect right. It is one of the conditions of the society in which we live, that men shall respect each other's property, and this is not his property, but mine—or rather, it is the property of my father and Colonel Follock."

"Best not say so, den. No need tell ebberyt'ing. No your land, say no your land. If he t'ink you spy, p'r'aps he shoot you, eh? Pale-face shoot spy; redman t'ink spy good feller!"

"Spies can be shot only in time of war; but, war or peace, you do not think these men will push matters to extremities? They will be afraid of the law."

"Law! What law to him? Nebber see law—don't go near law; don't know him."

"Well, I shall run the risk, for hunger is quite as active just now as curiosity and interest. There is no necessity, however, for your exposing yourself, Sureflint; do you stay behind, and wait for the result. If I am detained, you can carry the news to Chainbearer, who will know where to seek me. Stay you here, and let me go on alone—adieu."

Sureflint was not to be dropped in this manner. He said nothing, but the moment I began to move, he stepped

quietly into his accustomed place, in advance, and led the way toward the party of squatters. There were four of these men at work in the river, in addition to two stout lads and the old leader, who, as I afterward ascertained, was very generally known by the *sobriquet* of Thousandacres. The last remained on dry land, doubtless imagining that his years, and his long services in the cause of lawlessness and social disorganization, entitled him to this small advantage. The evil one has his privileges, as well as the public.

The first intimation our hosts received of this unexpected visit came from the cracking of a dried stick on which I had trodden. The Indian was not quicker to interpret and observe that well-known sound than the old squatter, who turned his head like thought, and at once saw the Onondago within a rod of the spot where he himself was standing. I was close on the Indian's heels. At first, neither surprise nor uneasiness was apparent in the countenance of Thousandacres. He knew the Trackless, as he called Susquesus, and, though this was the first visit of the Indian, at that particular "location," they had often met in a similar manner before, and invariably with as little preliminary notice. So far from anything unpleasant appearing in the countenance of the squatter, therefore, Susquesus was greeted with a smile, in which a certain leering expression of cunning was blended with that of welcome.

"So it 's only you, Trackless," exclaimed Thousand Acres, or Thousandacres, as I shall, in future, spell the name; "I did n't know but it might be a sheriff. Sich crittur's do get out into the woods, sometimes, you know; though they don't always get back ag'in. How come you to find us out, in this cunning spot, Onondago!"

"Hear mill, in night. Saw got loud tongue. Hungry; so come get somet'ing to eat."

"Waal, you 've done wisely, in that partic'lar, for we never have been better off for vi't'als. Pigeons is as plenty as land; and the law has n't got to that pass yet, as to forbid a body from taking pigeons, even though it be in another man's stubble. I must keep that saw better

greased, nights; though, I s'p'ose, a'ter all, 't was the cut of the teeth you heard, and not the rubbing of the plate?"

"Hear him all—saw got loud voice, tell you."

"Yes, there 's natur' in that. Come, we 'll take this path, up to the house, and see what Miss Thousandacres can do for you. Breakfast must be ready, by this time; and you, and your fri'nd behind you, there, is welcome to what we have, sich as it is. Now, as we go along," continued the squatter, leading the way up the path he had mentioned—"now, as we go along, you can tell me the news, Trackless. This is a desp'rate quiet spot; and all the tidings we get is brought back by the b'ys, when they come up-stream, from floating boards down into the river. A desp'rate sight have we got on hand, and I hope to hear that matters be going on so well, in Albany, that boards will bring suthin', soon. It 's high time honest labor met its reward."

"Don't know—neber sell board," answered the Indian; "nebber buy him. Don't care for board. Powder cheap, now 'e war-path shut up. Dat good, s'pose you t'ink."

"Waal, Trackless, I kear more for boards than for powder, I must own; though powder 's useful, too. Yes, yes; a useful thing is powder, in its way. Venison and bear's meat are both healthy, cheap food; and I have eaten catamount. Powder can be used in many ways. Who is your fri'nd, Trackless?"

"Ole young frien'—know his fader. Live in wood now, like us, this summer. Shoot deer like hunter."

"He 's wilcome—he 's heartily wilcome! All 's wilcome to these parts, but the landlord. You know me, Trackless—you 're well acquainted with old Thousandacres, and few words is best, among fri'nds of long standing. But, tell me, Onondago; have you seen anything of the Chainbearer, and his party of lawless surveyors, in the woods this summer? The b'ys brought up an account of his being at work, somewhere near by, this season, and that he 's at his old tricks ag'in!"

"Sartain, see him. Ole frien', too, Chainbearer. Live

wit' him, afore old French war—like to live with him, when can. Good man, Chainbearer, tell you, Thousandacres. What trick he do, eh?"

The Indian spoke a little sternly, for he loved Andries too well to hear him disrespectfully named, without feeling some sort of resentment. These men, however, were too much accustomed to plain dealing in their ordinary discourse, to take serious offense at trifles; and the amicable sunshine of the dialogue received no serious interruption from this passing cloud.

"What trick does Chainbearer do, Trackless?" answered the squatter; "a mortal sight of tricks, with them plaguy chains of his'n! If there warn't no chains and chainbearers, there could be no surveyors; and if there warn't no surveyors, there could be no boundaries to farms but the rifle; which is the best law-maker, too, that man ever invented. The Indians want no surveyors, Trackless?"

"S'pose he don't. It be bad to measure land, will own," answered the conscientious Susquesus, who would not deny his own principles, even while he despised and condemned the man who now asserted them. "Nebber see anyt'ing good in measurin' land."

"Ay, I know'd you was of the true Injin kidney!" exclaimed Thousandacres, exultingly, "and that 's it which makes sich fri'nds of us squatters and you redskins. But Chainbearer is at work hard by, is he, Trackless?"

"Sartain. He measure General Littlepage farm out. Who your landlord, eh?"

"Waal, I do s'pose it 's this same Littlepage, and a desp'rate rogue all agree in callin' him."

I started at hearing my honored and honorable father thus alluded to, and felt a strong disposition to resent the injury; though a glance from the Indian's eye cautioned me on the subject. I was then young, and had yet to learn that men were seldom wronged without being calumniated. I now know that this practice of circulating false reports of landlords, most especially in relation to their titles, is very general, taking its rise in the hostile positions that adventurers are constantly assuming on their

estates, in a country unsettled and migratory as our own, aided by the common and vulgar passion of envy. Let a man travel through New York, even at this day, and lend his ear to the language of the discontented tavern-brawlers, and he would hardly believe there was such a thing as a good title to an estate of any magnitude within its borders, or a bad one to the farm of any occupant in possession. There is among us a set of declaimers, who come from a state of society in which little distinction exists in either fortunes or social conditions, and who are incapable of even seeing, much less of appreciating, the vast differences that are created by habits, opinions, and education, but who reduce all moral discrepancies to dollars and cents. These men invariably quarrel with all above them, and, with them, to quarrel is to calumniate. Leaguing with the disaffected, of whom there always must be some especially, when men are compelled to pay their debts, one of their first acts is to assail the title of the landlord, when there happens to be one in their neighborhood, by lying and slandering. There seems to be no exception to the rule, the practice being resorted to against the oldest as well as against the most recently granted estates among us. The lie only varies in particulars; it is equally used against the titles of the old families of Van Rensselaer, Livingston, Beekman, Van Cortlandt, De Lancey, Schuyler, and others, as against the hundred new names that have sprung up in what is called the western counties, since the Revolution. It is the lie of the Father of Lies, who varies it to suit circumstances and believers. "A desp'rate rogue," all agree in calling the man who owns land that they desire to possess themselves, without being put to the unpleasant trouble of purchasing and paying for it.

I so far commanded myself, however, as to make no retort for the injustice done my upright, beloved, and noble-minded father, but left his defence to the friendly feelings and sterling honesty of Sureflint.

"Not so," answered the Indian, sternly. "Big lie—forked tongue tell dat; know gen'ral—sarve wid him—know him. Good warrior—honest man—dat lie. Tell him so to face."

"Waal—wa-a-l —I don't know," drawled out Mr. Thousandacres: how those rascals will "wa-a-l" and "I don't know," when they are cornered in one of their traducing tales, and are met face to face, as the Indian now met the squatter! "Wa-a-al, wa-a-l, I don't know, and only repeat what I have heern say. But here we be at the cabin, Trackless; and I see by the smoke that old Prudence and her gals has been actyve this morning, and we shall soon get suthin' comfortable for the stomach."

Hereupon, Mr. Thousandacres stopped at a convenient place by the side of the stream, and commenced washing his face and hands; an operation that was now performed for the first time that day.

CHAPTER XVII.

"He stepped before the monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
But on his desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said."

Marmion.

WHILE the squatter was thus occupied in arranging his toilet, previously to taking his morning meal, I had a moment of leisure to look about in. We had ascended to the level of the mill, where was an open, half-cleared space of some sixty acres in extent, that was under a rude cultivation. Stubs and stumps abounded, and the fences were of logs, showing that the occupancy was still of recent date. In fact, as I afterward ascertained, Thousandacres, with his family of hopeful sons and daughters, numbering in all more than twenty souls, had squatted at that spot just four years before. The mill-seat was admirable, nature having done for it nearly all that was required, though the mill itself was as unartificial and make-shift as such a construction very well could be. Agriculture evidently occupied very little of the time of the family, which tilled just enough land "to make a live on 't," while everything in the shape of lumber was "improved" to the utmost. A vast number of noble pines had been felled, and boards and shingles were to be seen in profusion on every side. A few of the first were being sent to market, in order to meet the demands of the moment, in the way of groceries; but the intention was to wait for the rise in the little stream, after the fall rains, in

order to send the bulk of the property into the common artery of the Hudson, and to reap the great reward of the toil of the summer and spring.

I saw, also, that there must be additions to this family, in the way of marriage, as they occupied no less than five cabins, all of which were of logs, freshly erected, and had an air of comfort and stability about them, that one would not have expected to meet where the title was so flimsy. All this, as I fancied, indicated a design not to remove very soon. It was probable that some of the oldest of the sons and daughters were married, and that the patriarch was already beholding a new generation of squatters springing up about him. A few of the young men were visible, lounging about the different cabins, and the mill was sending forth that peculiar, cutting, grating sound, that had so distinctly attracted the attention of Susquesus, even in the depths of the forest.

"Walk in, Trackless," cried Thousandacres, in a hearty, free manner, which proved that what came easily went as freely; "walk in, fri'nd; I don't know your name, but that 's no great matter, where there 's enough for all, and a welcome in the bargain. Here 's the old woman, ready and willing to sarve you, and looking as smiling as a gal of fifteen."

The last part of this statement, however, was not precisely accurate. "Miss Thousandacres," as the squatter sometimes magnificently called his consort, or the dam of his young brood, was far from receiving us with either smiles or welcomes. A sharp-featured, keen, gray-eyed old woman, her thoughts were chiefly bent on the cares of her brood; and her charities extended but little beyond them. She had been the mother of fourteen children herself, twelve of which survived. All had been born amid the difficulties, privations, and solitudes of stolen abodes in the wilderness. That woman had endured enough to break down the constitutions and to destroy the tempers of half a dozen of the ordinary beings of her sex; yet she survived, the same enduring, hard-working, self-denying, suffering creature she had been from the day of her bloom and beauty. These two

last words might be supposed to be used in mockery, could one have seen old Prudence, sallow, attenuated, with sunken cheeks, hollow, lack-lustre eyes, and broken-mouthed, as I now saw her; but there were the remains of great beauty, notwithstanding, about the woman; and I afterward learned that she had once been among the fairest of the fair, in her native mountains. In all the intercourse I subsequently had with her family, the manner of this woman was anxious, distrustful, watchful, and bore a strong resemblance to that of the dam that is overseeing the welfare of her cubs. As to her welcome at the board, it was neither hearty nor otherwise; it being so much a matter of course for the American to share his meal with the stranger, that little is said or thought of the boon.

Notwithstanding the size of the family of Thousandacres, the cabin in which he dwelt was not crowded. The younger children of the settlement, ranging between the ages of four and twelve, appeared to be distributed among all the habitations indifferently, putting into the dishes wherever there was an opening, much as pigs thrust themselves in at any opening at a trough. The business of eating commenced simultaneously throughout the whole settlement, Prudence having blown a blast upon a conch-shell, as the signal. I was too hungry to lose any time in discourse, and set to, with the most hearty good-will, upon the coarse fare, the moment there was an opportunity. My example was imitated by all around our own particular board, it being the refined and intellectual only who habitually converse at their meals. The animal had too great a preponderance among the squatters, to leave them an exception to the rule.

At length the common hunger was appeased, and I could see that those who sat around began to examine me with a little more curiosity than they had previously manifested. There was nothing in the fashion of my attire to excite suspicion, perhaps, though I did feel some little concern on account of its quality. In that day, the social classes were broadly distinguished by dress, no man even affecting to assume the wardrobe of a gentleman, without having certain pretensions to the character. In the woods, however, it was

the custom to throw aside everything like finery, and I wore the hunting-shirt already mentioned, as my outer garment. The articles most likely to betray my station in life were beneath this fortunate covering, and might escape observation. Then our party was small, consisting, besides the parents and the two guests, of only one young man and one young woman, of about the ages of two-and-twenty and sixteen, whom the mother addressed as Zephaniah and Lowiny, the latter being one of the very common American corruptions of some fine name taken from a book—Lavinia, quite likely.[1] These two young persons deported themselves with great modesty at the table, old Thousandacres and his wife, spite of their lawless lives, having maintained a good deal of the ancient Puritan discipline among their descendants, in relation to things of this nature. Indeed, I was struck with the singular contrast between the habitual attention that was paid by all in the settlement to certain appearances of the sort, and that certainty which every one must have possessed that they were living daily in the commission of offences opposed not only to the laws of the land but to the common, inherent convictions of right. In this particular, they exhibited what is often found in life, the remains of ancient habits and principles, existing in the shape of habits, long after the substance that had produced them had disappeared.

"Have you asked these folks about Chainbearer?" said Prudence, abruptly, as soon as the knives and forks were

[1] The commoner dialect of New England is as distinct from the language of the rest of the Republic, cases of New England descent excepted, as those of many of the English counties are from that of London. One of the peculiarities of the former is to pronounce the final *a* of a word, like *y*: calling America, Ameriky; Utica, Utiky; Ithaca, Ithaky. Thus Lavinia would be very apt to be pronounced Lavinny, Lavyny, or Lowiny. As there is a marked ambition for fine names, the effect of these corruptions on a practised ear is somewhat ludicrous. The rest of the nation is quite free from the peculiarity. Foreigners often mistake New Englandisms for Americanisms; the energy, importance, and prominency of the people of the former portion of the country, giving them an influence that is disproportioned to their numbers.

laid down, and while we still continued in our seats at the table. "I feel a consarn of mind about that man, that I never feel about any other."

"Never fear Chainbearer, woman," answered the husband. "He 's got his summer's work afore him, without coming near us. By the last accounts, this young Littlepage, that the old rogue of a father has sent into the country, has got him out in his own settlement; where he 'll be apt to keep him, I calkerlate, till cold weather sets in. Let me once get off all the lumber we 've cut, and sell it, and I kear very little about Chainbearer, or his master."

"This is bold talk, Aaron; but jist remember how often we 've squatted, and how often we 've been driven to move. I s'pose I 'm talking afore fri'nds, in sayin' what I do."

"No fear of any here, wife. Trackless is an old acquaintance, and has as little relish for law-titles as any on us; and his fri'nd is our fri'nd." I confess that I felt a little uncomfortable at this remark; but the squatter going on with his conversation, there was no opportunity for saying anything, had I been so disposed. "As for moving," continued the husband, "I never moved but twice without getting pay for my betterments. Now, I call that a good business for a man who has squatted no less than seventeen times. If the worst comes to the worst, we 're young enough to make an eighteenth pitch. So that I save the lumber, I keer but little for your Littlepages or Greatpages; the mill is no great matter, without the gear; and that has travelled all the way from Varmount, as it is, and is used to moving. It can go farther."

"Yes, but the lumber, Aaron! The water 's low now, and you can never get it to market, until the rivers rise, which may n't be these three months. Think how many days' labor that lumber has cost you, and all on us, and what a sight of it there would be to lose!"

"Yes, but we *won't* lose it, woman," answered Thousandacres, compressing his lips, and clenching his hands, in a way to show how intensely he felt on the subject of property himself, however dishonestly acquired. "My sweat

and labor be in them boards; and it 's as good as sap, any day. What a man sweats for, he has a right to."

This was somewhat loose morality, it is true, since a man might sweat in bearing away his neighbor's goods; but a portion of the human race is a good deal disposed to feel and reason on principles but little more sound than this of old Thousandacres.

"Wa-a-l," answered the woman, "I 'm sure I don't want to see you and the b'ys lose the fruits of your labors; not I. You 've honestly toiled and wrought at 'em logs, in a way I never seed human beings outdo; and 't would be hard," looking particularly at me, "now that they 've cut the trees, hauled 'em to mill, and sawed the boards, to see another man step in and claim all the property. That could never be right, but is agin all justice, whether Varmount or York. I s'pose there 's no great harm in jist askin' what your name may be, young man?"

"None in the world," I answered, with a self-command that I could see delighted the Onondago. "My name is Mordaunt."

"Mordaunt!" repeated the woman, quickly. "Don't we know suthin' of that name? Is that a fri'ndly name to us Varmounters? How is it, Aaron? you ought to know."

"No, I had n't ought to, for I never heerd tell of any sich name afore. So long as 't is n't Littlepage, I kear nothin' about it."

I felt relieved at this reply, for I will own, that the idea of falling into the power of these lawless men was far from pleasant to me. From Thousandacres, down to the lad of seventeen, they all stood six feet in their stockings; and a stouter, more broad-shouldered, sinewy race, was not often seen. The idea of resisting them by force was out of the question. I was entirely without arms; though the Indian was better provided; but no less than four rifles were laid on brackets in this one cabin; and I made no doubt that every male of the family had his own particular weapon. The rifle was the first necessary of men of this stamp, being as serviceable in procuring food as in protecting them from their enemies.

It was at this moment that Prudence drew a long sigh, and rose from table in order to renew her domestic labors. Lowiny followed her motions in submissive silence, and we men sauntered to the door of the cabin, where I could get a new view of the nature of those "betterments" that Thousandacres so highly prized, and of the extent of the depredations that had been committed on Colonel Follock and my father. The last were by no means insignificant; and, at a later day, they were estimated, by competent judges, to amount to fully a thousand dollars in value. Of course these were a thousand dollars totally lost, inasmuch as redress, in a pecuniary sense, was entirely out of the question with men of the stamp of Thousandacres and his sons. This class of persons are fond of saying, "I 'll guarantee," and "I 'll bind myself" to do this or that; but the guaranty and obligation are equally without value. In fact, those who are the least responsible are usually the freest with such pledges.

"This is a handsome spot," said Thousandacres, whose real name was Aaron Timberman. "This is a handsome spot, Mr. Mordaunt, and one it would go kind o' hard to give up at the biddin' of a man who never laid eye on 't. Be you any way acquainted with law?"

"A very little; no more than we all get to be as we move along through life."

"You 've not travelled far on that journey, young man, as any one can see by your face. But you 've had opportunities, as a body can tell by your speech, which is n't exactly like our 'n, out here in the woods, from which I had kind o' thought your schoolin' might be more than common. A body can tell, though his own l'arnin' amounts to no great matter."

This notion of Aaron's, that my modes of speech, pronunciation, accent, and utterance had come from the schools, was natural enough, perhaps; though few persons ever acquire accuracy in either, except in the familiar intercourse of their childhood. As for the "common schools" of New York, they are perpetuating errors in these respects, rather than correcting them; and one of the largest steps in their

improvement would be to have a care that he who teaches, teaches accurately as to sounds, as well as to significations. Under the present system, vicious habits are confirmed by deliberate instruction and example, rather than corrected.

"My schooling," I answered, modestly enough I trust, "has been a little better than common, though it has not been good enough, as you see, to keep me out of the woods."

"All that may be inclination. Some folks have a nat'ral turn for the wilderness, and it's workin' agin the grain, and nearly useless, to try to make settlement-bodies of 'em. D' ye happen to know what lumber is likely to bring this fall?"

"Everything is looking up since the peace, and it is fair to expect lumber will begin to command a price, as well as other property."

"Wa-a-l, it's time it should! During the whull war a board has been of little more account than a strip of bark, unless it happened to be in the neighborhood of an army. We lumbermen have had an awful time on it these last eight years, and more than once I 've felt tempted to gi'n in, and go and settle down in some clearin', like quieter folks; but I thought as the 'arth is to come to an eend, the war must sartainly come to an eend afore it."

"The calculation was a pretty safe one; the war must have truly made a dull time to you; nor do I see how you well got along during the period it lasted."

"Bad enough; though war-times has their windfalls as well as peace-times. Once, the inimy seized a sight of continental stores, sich as pork, and flour, and new England rum, and they pressed all the teams, far and near, to carry off their plunder, and my sleigh and horses had to go along with the rest on 'em. Waal, go we did; and I got as handsome a load as ever you seed laid in a lumber-sleigh; what I call assortment, and one, too, that was mightily to my own likin', seein' I loaded it up with my own hands. 'T was in a woody country, as you may s'pose, or I would n't have been there; and, as I know'd all the by-roads, I watched my chance, and got out of the line

without being seen, and druv as straight to my own hum as if I'd just come from tradin' in the nearest settlement. That was the most profitablest journey I ever tuck, and what is more, it was a short one."

Here old Thousandacres stopped to laugh, which he did in as hearty, frank a manner as if his conscience had never known care. This story, I fancy, was a favorite with him, for I heard no less than three other allusions to the exploit on which it was based, during the short time our communication with each other lasted. I observed the first smile I had seen on the face of Zephaniah appear at the recital of this anecdote; though I had not failed to notice that the young man, as fine a specimen of rustic, rude, manly proportions as one could wish to see, had kept his eyes on me at every occasion, in a manner that excited some uneasiness.

"That was a fortunate service for you," I remarked, as soon as Aaron had had his laugh; "unless, indeed, you felt the necessity of giving back the property to the continental officers."

"Not a bit of it! Congress was poor enough, I 'm willin' to own, but it was richer than I was, or ever will be. When property has changed hands once, title goes with it; and some say that these very lands, coming from the king, ought now to go to the people, jist as folks happen to want 'em. There 's reason and right, I 'm sartain, in the idee, and I should n't wonder if it held good in law, one day!"

Alas! alas! for poor human nature again. Seldom does man commit a wrong but he sets his ingenuity to work to frame excuses for it. When his mind thus gets to be perverted by the influence of his passions, and more especially by that of rapacity, he never fails to fancy new principles to exist to favor his schemes, and manifests a readiness in inventing them, which, enlisted on the side of goodness, might render him a blessing instead of a curse to his race. But roguery is so active, while virtue is so apt to be passive, that in the eternal conflict that is waged between them, that which is gained by the truth and inherent power of the last is, half the time, more than neutralized by the unwearied

exertions of the first! This, I fear, may be found to contain the weak spot of our institutions. So long as law represents the authority of an individual, individual pride and jealousy may stimulate it to constant watchfulness; whereas, law representing the community carries with it a divided responsibility, that needs the excitement of intolerable abuses ere it will arouse itself in its own vindication. The result is merely another proof that, in the management of the ordinary affairs of life, men are usually found to be stronger than principles.

"Have you ever had occasion to try one of your titles of possession in a court of law, against that of a landholder who got his right from a grant?" I asked, after reflecting a moment on the truth I have just narrated.

Thousandacres shook his head, looked down a moment, and pondered a little, in his turn, ere he gave me the following answer:

"Sartain," he said. "We all like to be on the right side, if we can; and some of our folks kind o' persuaded me I might make out, once, agin a reg'lar landlord. So I stood trial with him; but he beat me, Mr. Mordaunt, just the same as if I had been a chicken, and he the hawk that had me in his talons. You 'll never catch me trusting myself in the claws of the law ag'in, though that happened as long ago as afore the old French war. I shall never trust to law any more. It may do for them that 's rich, and don't kear whether they win or lose; but law is a desp'rate bad business for them that has n't got money to go into it, right eend foremost."

"And should Mr. Littlepage discover your being here, and feel disposed to come to some arrangement with you, what conditions would you be apt to accept?"

"Oh! I 'm never ag'in trade. Trade 's the spirit of life; and seein' that Gin'ral Littlepage has some right, as I do s'pose is the case, I should n't want to be hard on him. If he would keep things quiet, and not make a fuss about it, but would leave the matter out to men, and they men of the right sort, I should n't be difficult; for I 'm one of that kind that hates lawsuits, and am always ready to do the right

thing ; and so he 'd find me as ready to settle as any man he ever had on his lands."

"But on what terms? You have not told me the terms."

"As to tarms, I 'd not be hard, by any means. No man can say old Thousandacres ever druv' hard tarms, when he had the best on 't. That 's not in my natur', which runs altogether toward reason and what 's right. Now you see, Mordaunt, how matters stand atween this Littlepage and myself. He 's got a paper title, they tell me, and I 've got possession, which is always a squatter's claim ; and a good one 't is, where there 's plenty of pine and a mill-seat, with a handy market!"

Here Thousandacres stopped to laugh again, for he generally indulged in this way, in so hearty and deep a tone, as to render it difficult to laugh and talk in the same breath. As soon as through, however, he did not forget to pursue the discourse.

"No, no man that understands the woods will gainsay them advantages," added the squatter; "and of all on 'em am I now in the enj'yment. Wa-a-l, Gin'ral Littlepage, as they call him about here, has a paper title ; and I 've got possession. He has the courts on his side, I 'll allow ; but here are my betterments — sixty-three as large acres chopped over and hauled to mill, as can be found in all Charlotte, or Washington, as they tell me the county is now called."

"But General Littlepage may not fancy it an improvement to have his land stripped of its pine. You know, Thousandacres, as well as I do, that pine is usually thought to greatly add to the value of lands hereabouts, the Hudson making it so easy to get it to market."

"Lord! youngster, do you think I had n't all that in my mind, when I made my pitch here? You can't teach old bones where it 's best to strike the first blow with an axe. Now, I 've got in the creek" (this word is used, in the parlance of the State, for a small river, nine times in ten), "now, I 've got in the creek, on the way to the Hudson, in the booms below the mill, and in the mill-yard yonder, a

hundred and twenty thousand feet of as handsome stuff as ever was cribbed, or rafted; and there 's logs enough cut and hauled to make more than as much more. I some sort o' think you know this Littlepage, by your talk; and, as I like fair dealin's, and what 's right atween man and man, I 'll just tell you what I 'll do, so that you can tell him, if you ever meet, and the matter should come up atween you, as sich things sometimes do, in all talk like, though a body has no real consarn in the affair; and so you can tell this gin'ral that old Thousandacres is a reasonable man, and is willing to settle on these tarms; but he won't gi'n a grain more. If the gin'ral will let me get all the lumber to market peaceably, and take off the crops the b'ys have put in with their own hands, and carry off all the mill-gear, and take down the doors and windows of the houses, and all the iron-work a body can find about, I 'm willing to agree to quit 'arly enough in the spring to let any man he chooses come into possession in good season to get in spring grain, and make garden. There; them 's my tarms, and I 'll not abate on one on 'em, on no account at all. But that much I'll do for peace; for I do love peace and quiet, my woman says, most desp'ately."

I was about to answer this characteristic communication— perfectly characteristic as to feelings, one-sided sense of right, principles, and language — when Zephaniah, the tall son of the squatter, suddenly laid a hand on his father's arm, and led him aside. This young man had been examining my person, during the whole of the dialogue at the door of the cabin, in a way that was a little marked. I was disposed at first to attribute these attentions to the curiosity natural to youth, at its first meeting with one who might be supposed to enjoy opportunities of ascertaining the newest modes of dress and deportment. Rustics, in America, ever manifest this feeling, and it was not unreasonable to suppose that this young squatter might have felt its influence. But, as it soon appeared, I had altogether mistaken my man. Although both he and his sister, Lowiny, had never turned their eyes from my person, I soon discovered that they had been governed by totally opposing feelings.

The first intimation I got of the nature of the mistake into which I had fallen was from the manner of Thousandacres, as soon as his son had spoken to him, apart, for a single minute. I observed that the old squatter turned suddenly, and began to scrutinize my appearance with a scowling, but sharp eye. Then he would give all his attention to his son; after which, I came in for a new turn of examination. Of course, such a scene could not last a great while, and I soon felt the relief of being again face to face with the man whom I now set down for an enemy.

"Harkee, young man," resumed Thousandacres, as soon as he had returned and placed himself directly before me, "my b'y, Zeph, there, has got a suspicion consarning you, that must be cleared up, fairly atween us, afore we part. I like fair dealin's, as I've told you more than once, already, and despise underhandedness from the bottom of my heart. Zeph tells me that he has a kind o' suspicion that you're the son of this very Littlepage, and have been sent among us to spy out, and to l'arn how things stood, afore you let on your evil intentions. Is it so, or not?"

"What reason has Zeph for such a suspicion?" I answered, with such coolness as I could assume. "He is a perfect stranger to me, and I fancy this is the first time we have ever met."

"He agrees to that, himself; but mankind can sometimes see things that is n't put directly afore their eyes. My son goes and comes, frequently, between the Ravensnest settlement and our own, though I don't suppose he lets on any great deal about his proper hum. He has worked as much as two months, at a time, in that part of the country, and I find him useful in carrying on a little trade, once and awhile, with 'Squire Newcome."

"You are acquainted, then, with Mr. Jason Newcome, or 'Squire Newcome, as you call him?"

"I call him what's right, I hope!" answered the old man sharply. "He is a 'squire, and should be called a 'squire. Give the devil his due; that's my principle. But Zephaniah has been out a considerable spell this summer to work at Ravensnest. I tell him he has a gal in his eye,

by his hankering so much after the 'Nest folks, but he won't own it; but out he has been, and he tells me this Littlepage's son was expected to come into the settlement about the time he last left there."

"And you are acquainted with 'Squire-Newcome?" I said, pursuing the subject as its points presented themselves to my own mind, rather than following the thread of the squatter's discursive manner of thinking; "so well acquainted as to trade with him?"

"Sartain; well acquainted, I may say. The 'squire tuck" (took) "all the lumber I cut 'arly in the spring, rafting and selling it on his own account, paying us in groceries, women's cloth, and rum. He made a good job of it, I hear tell, and is hankerin' round a'ter what is now in the creek; but I rather think I'll send the b'ys off with that. But what's that to the purpose? Didn't you tell me, young man, that your name is Mordaunt?"

"I did; and in so saying I told no more than the truth."

"And what may you call your given name? A'ter all, old woman," turning to the anxious wife and mother, who had drawn near to listen, having most probably been made acquainted with the nature of her son's suspicions—"a'ter all, the b'y may be mistaken, and this young man as innocent as any one of your own flesh and blood."

"Mordaunt is what you call my 'given name,'" I answered, disdaining deception, "and Littlepage—" The hand of the Indian was suddenly placed on my mouth, stopping further utterance.

It was too late, however, for the friendly design of the Onondago, the squatters readily comprehending all I had intended to say. As for Prudence, she walked away; and I soon heard her calling all her younger children by name, to collect them near her person, as the hen gathers its chickens beneath the wing. Thousandacres took the matter very differently. His countenance grew dark, and he whispered a word to Lowiny, who departed on some errand with reluctant steps, as I thought, and eyes that did not always look in the direction she was walking.

"I see how it is! I see how it is!" exclaimed the

squatter, with as much of suppressed indignation in his voice and mien as if his cause were that of offended innocence; "we've got a spy among us, and war time's too fresh not to let us know how to deal with sich folks. Young man, what's your arr'nd down here, in my betterments, and beneath my ruff?"

"My errand, as you call it, Thousandacres, is to look after the property that is entrusted to my care. I am the son of General Littlepage, one of the owners of this spot, and the attorney of both."

"Oh! an attorney, be you?" cried the squatter, mistaking the attorney in fact for an attorney-at-law—a sort of being for whom he necessarily entertained a professional antipathy. "I'll attorney ye! If you or your gin'ral father thinks that Aaron Thousandacres is a man to have his territories invaded by the inimy, and keep his hands in his pockets the whull time, he's mistaken. Send 'em along, Lowiny, send along the b'ys, and let's see if we can't find lodgin's for this young attorney gin'ral, as well as board."

There was no mistaking the aspect of things now. Hostilities had commenced in a certain sense, and it became incumbent on me for the sake of safety to be on the alert. I knew that the Indian was armed; and, determined to defend my person if possible, I was resolved to avail myself of the use of his weapon should it become necessary. Stretching out an arm, and turning to the spot where Susquesus had just stood, to lay hold of his rifle, I discovered that he had disappeared.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"The lawless herd, with fury blind,
Have done him cruel wrong;
The flowers are gone, but still we find
The honey on his tongue."

COWPER.

THERE I stood, alone and unarmed, in the centre of six athletic men—for Lowiny had been sent to assemble her brothers, a business in which she was aided by Prudence's blowing a peculiar sort of blast on her conch—and as unable to resist as a child would have been in the hands of its parent. As a fruitless scuffle would have been degrading, as well as useless, I at once determined to submit, temporarily at least, or so long as submission did not infer disgrace, and was better than resistance. There did not seem to be any immediate disposition to lay violent hands on me, however, and there I stood, a minute or two after I had missed Sureflint, surrounded by the whole brood of the squatter, young and old, male and female; some looking defiance, others troubled, and all anxious. As for myself, I will frankly own my sensations were far from pleasant; for I knew I was in the hands of the Philistines, in the depths of a forest, fully twenty miles from any settlement, and with no friends nearer than the party of the Chainbearer, who was at least two leagues distant, and altogether ignorant of my position as well as of my necessities. A ray of hope, however, gleamed in upon me through the probable agency of the Onondago.

Not for an instant did I imagine that long-known and well-tried friend of my father and the Chainbearer false. His character was too well established for that; and it soon

occurred to me, that, foreseeing his own probable detention should he remain, he had vanished with a design to let the strait in which I was placed be known, and to lead a party to my rescue. A similiar idea probably struck Thousandacres almost at the same instant; for glancing his eye around him, he suddenly demanded,—

"What has become of the redskin? The varmint has dodged away, as I 'm an honest man! Nathaniel, Moses, and Daniel, to your rifles and on the trail. Bring the fellow in, if you can, with a whull skin; but if you can't, an Injin more or less will never be heeded in the woods."

I soon had occasion to note that the patriarchal government of Thousandacres was of a somewhat decided and prompt character. A few words went a great way in it, as was now apparent; for in less than two minutes after Aaron had issued his decree, those namesakes of the prophets and lawgivers of old, Nathaniel and Moses and Daniel, were quitting the clearing on diverging lines, each carrying a formidable, long, American hunting-rifle in his hand. This weapon, so different in the degree of its power from the short military piece that has become known to modern warfare, was certainly in dangerous hands; for each of those young men had been familiar with his rifle from boyhood; gunpowder and liquor, with a little lead, composing nearly all the articles on which they lavished money for their amusement. I trembled for Susquesus; though I knew he must anticipate a pursuit, and was so well skilled in throwing off a chase as to have obtained the name of the Trackless. Still, the odds were against him; and experience has shown that the white man usually surpasses the Indian even in his own peculiar practices, when there have been opportunities to be taught. I could do no more, however, than utter a mental prayer for the escape of my friend.

"Bring that chap in here," added old Thousandacres, sternly, the moment he saw that his three sons were off; enough remaining to enforce that or any other order he might choose to issue. "Bring him into this room, and let us hold a court on him, sin' he is sich a lover of the law. If law he likes, law let him have. An attorney, is he? I

warnt to know! What has an attorney to do with me and mine, out here in the woods?"

While this was in the course of being said, the squatter, and father of squatters, led the way into his own cabin, where he seated himself with an air of authority, causing the females and younger males of his brood to range themselves in a circle behind his chair. Seeing the folly of resistance, at a hint from Zephaniah I followed, the three young men occupying the place near the door, as a species of guard. In this manner we formed a sort of court, in which the old fellow figured as the investigating magistrate, and I figured as the criminal.

"An attorney, be you!" muttered Thousandacres, whose ire against me in my supposed, would seem to be more excited than it was against me in my real character. "B'ys, silence in the court; we 'll give this chap as much law as he can stagger under, sin' he 's of a law natur'. Everything shall be done accordin' to rule. Tobit," addressing his oldest son, a colossal figure of about six-and-twenty, "you've been in the law more than any on us, and can give us the word. What was 't they did with you, first, when they had you up in Hampshire colony; the time when you and that other young man went across from the Varmount settlements to look for sheep? A raft of the critturs you did get atween you, though you was waylaid and robbed of all your hard 'arnin's, afore you got back ag'in in the mountains. They dealt with you accordin' to law, 't was said; now, what was the first thing done?"

"I was tuck" (taken) "afore the 'squire," answered Tobit Thousandacres, as he was often called, "who heerd the case, asked me what I had to say for myself, and then permitted me, as it was tarmed; so I went to jail until the trial came on, and I s'pose you know what come next, as well as I do."

I took it for granted that what "come next" was anything but pleasant in remembrance, the reason Tobit did not relish it even in description, inasmuch as sheep-stealers were very apt to get "forty save one" at the whipping-post, in that day, a species of punishment that was admirably adapted to the particular offence. We are getting among

us a set of *soi-disant* philanthropists, who, in their great desire to coddle and reform rogues, are fast placing the punishment of offences on the honest portion of the community, for the especial benefit of their *élèves*. Some of these persons have already succeeded in cutting down all our whipping-posts, thereby destroying the cheapest and best mode of punishing a particular class of crimes that was ever intended or practised. A generation hence, our children will feel the consequences of this mistaken philanthropy. In that day, let those who own fowl-houses, pig-pens, orchards, smoke-houses, and other similar temptations to small depredations, look to it, for I am greatly mistaken if the insecurity of their movables does not give the most unanswerable of all commentaries on this capital misstep. One whipping-post, discreetly used, will do more toward reforming a neighborhood than a hundred jails, with their twenty and thirty days' imprisonment![1] I have as much disposition to care for the reformation of criminals as is healthful, if I know myself; but the great object of all the punishments of society, namely, its own security, ought never to be sacrificed to this, which is but a secondary consideration. Render character, person, and property as secure as possible, in the first place, after which, try as many experiments in philanthropy as you please.

I am sorry to see how far the disposition to economize is extending itself, in the administration of American justice, generally. Under a government like that of this country, it is worse than idle, for it is perfectly futile to attempt to gratify the imagination by a display of its power, through the agency of pomp and representation. Such things, doubtless, have their uses, and are not to be senselessly

[1] Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage writes here with prophetic accuracy: Small depredations of this nature have got to be so very common, that few now think of resorting to the law for redress. Instead of furnishing the prompt and useful punishment that was administered by our fathers, the law is as much adorned with its cavillings and delays in the minor as in the more important cases; and it often takes years to bring a small depredator even to trial, if he can find money to fee a sagacious lawyer.—EDITOR.

condemned until one has had an opportunity of taking near views of their effects; though useful, or the reverse, they can never succeed here. But these communities of ours have it in their power to furnish to the world a far more illustrious example of human prescience, and benevolent care, by their prompt, exact, and well-considered administration of justice—including the cases both in the civil and the criminal courts. With what pride might not the American retort, when derided for the simplicity of his executive, and the smallness of the national expenditure in matters of mere representation, could he only say, "True, we waste nothing on mere parade; but turn to the courts, and to the justice of the country; which, after all, are the great aims of every good government. Look at the liberality of our expenditures for the command of the highest talent, in the first place; see with what generous care we furnish judges in abundance, to prevent them from being overworked, and to avoid ruinous delays to suitors; then turn to the criminal courts, and into, first, the entire justice of the laws; next, the care had in the selection of jurors; the thorough impartiality of all the proceedings; and, finally, when the right demands it, the prompt, unerring, and almost terrific majesty of punishment." But, to return to something that is a good deal more like truth.

"Yes, yes," rejoined Thousandacres, "there is no use in riling the feelin's, by talking of that" (meaning Tobit's sufferings, not at the stake, but at the post); "a hint 's as good as a description. You was taken afore a magistrate, was you?—and he permitted you to prison—but he asked what you had to say for yourself, first? That was only fair, and I mean to act it all out here, accordin' to law. Come, young attorney, what have you got to say for yourself?"

It struck me that, alone as I was, in the hands of men who were a species of outlaws, it might be well to clear myself from every imputation that, at least, was not merited.

"In the first place," I answered, "I will explain a mistake into which you have fallen, Thousandacres; for, let

us live as friends or foes, it is always best to understand facts. I am not an attorney in the sense you imagine—I am not a lawyer."

I could see that the whole brood of squatters, Prudence included, was a good deal mollified by this declaration. As for Lowiny, her handsome, ruddy face actually expressed exultation and delight! I thought I heard that girl half suppress some such exclamation as "I knowed he was n't no lawyer!" As for Tobit, the scowling look, replete with cat-o'-nine-tails, actually departed, temporarily at least. In short, this announcement produced a manifest change for the better.

"No lawyer a'ter all!" exclaimed Thousandacres; "did n't you say you was an attorney?"

"That much is true. I told you that I was the son of General Littlepage, and that I was his attorney, and that of Colonel Follock, the other tenant in common of this estate; meaning that I held their power of attorney to convey lands, and to transact certain other business, in their names."

This caused me to lose almost as much ground as I had just gained, though, being the literal truth, I was resolved neither to conceal, nor to attempt to evade it.

"Good land!" murmured Lowiny. "Why could n't the man say nothin' about all that?"

A reproving look from Prudence rebuked the girl, and she remained silent afterward, for some time.

"A power of attorney, is it!" rejoined the squatter. "W-a-a-l, that 's not much better than being a downright lawyer. It 's having the power of an attorney, I s'pose, and without their accursed power it 's little I should kear for any of the breed. Then you 're the son of that Gin'ral Littlepage, which is next thing to being the man himself. I should expect if Tobit, my oldest b'y, was to fall into the hands of some that might be named, it would go hard with him, all the same as if 't was myself. I know that some make a difference atween parents and children, but other some does n't. What 's that you said about this gin'ral's only being a common tenant of this land? How dares he to call himself its owner, if he 's only a common tenant?"

The reader is not to be surprised at Thousandacres' trifling blunders of this sort; for those whose rule of right is present interest, frequently, in the eagerness of rapacity, fall into this very kind of error; holding that cheap at one moment, which they effect to deem sacred at the next. I dare say, if the old squatter had held a lease of the spot he occupied, he would at once have viewed the character and rights of a "common tenant," as connected with two of the most important interests of the country. It happened now, however, that it was "his bull that was goring our ox."

"How dares he to call himself the owner of the sile, when he's only a common tenant, I say?" repeated Thousandacres, with increasing energy, when he found I did not answer immediately.

"You have misunderstood my meaning. I did not say that my father was only a 'common tenant' of this property, but that he and Colonel Follock own it absolutely in common, each having his right in every acre, and not one owning one half while the other owns the other; which is what the law terms being 'tenants in common,' though strictly owners in fee."

"I should n't wonder, Tobit, if he turns out to be an attorney, in our meaning, a'ter all!"

"It looks desp'rately like it, father," answered the eldest born, who might have been well termed the heir-at-law of all his progenitor's squatting and fierce propensities. "If he is n't a downright lawyer, he looks more like one than any man I ever seed out of court, in my whull life."

"He 'll find his match! Law and I have been at loggerheads ever sin' the day I first went into Varmount, or them plaguy Hampshire Grants. When law gets me in its clutches, it's no wonder if it gets the best on't; but when I get law in mine, or one of its sarvants, it shall be my fault if law does n't come out second best. Wa-a-l, we 've heerd the young man's story, Tobit. I've asked him what he had to say for himself, and he has g'in us his tell—tell'd us how he 's his own father's son, and that the gin'ral is some sort of a big tenant, instead of being a landlord, and is n't much

better than we are ourselves; and it 's high time I permitted him to custody. You had writin's for what they did to you, I dares to say, Tobit?"

"Sartain. The magistrate give the sheriff's deputy a permittimus, and on the strength of that, they permitted me to jail."

"Ye-e-es—I know all about their niceties and appearances! I have had dealin's afore many a magistrate, in my day, and have onsuited many a chap that thought to get the best on 't afore we begun! Onsuiting the man that brings the suit, is the cleanest way of getting out of the law, as I knows on; but it takes a desp'rate long head sometimes to do it! Afore I permit this young man, I 'll show writin's, too. Prudence, just onlock the drawer—"

"I wish to correct one mistake before you proceed further," interrupted I. "For the second time, I tell you I am no lawyer, in any sense of the word. I am a soldier —have commanded a company in General Littlepage's own regiment, and served with the army when only a boy in years. I saw both Burgoyne and Cornwallis surrender, and their troops lay down their arms."

"Good now! Who 'd ha' thought it!" exclaimed the compassionate Lowiny. "And he so young, that you 'd hardly think the wind had ever blown on him!"

My announcement of this new character was not without a marked effect. Fighting was a thing to the whole family's taste, and what they could appreciate better, perhaps, than any other act or deed. There was something warlike in Thousandacres' very countenance and air, and I was not mistaken in supposing he might feel some little sympathy for a soldier. He eyed me keenly; and whether or not he discovered signs of the truth of my assertion in my mien, I saw that he once more relented in purpose.

"You out agin Burg'yne!" the old fellow exclaimed. "Can I believe what you say? Why, I was out agin Burg'yne myself, with Tobit, and Moses, and Nathaniel, and Jedediah—with every male crittur of the family, in short, that was big enough to load and fire. I count them days as among my very best, though they did come late, and

a'ter old age had made some head agin me. How can you prove you was out agin Burg'yne and Cornwallis!"

I knew that there was often a strange medley of *soi-disant* patriotic feeling mixed up with the most confirmed knavery in ordinary matters, and saw I had touched a chord that might thrill on the sympathies of even these rude and supremely selfish beings. The patriotism of such men, indeed, is nothing but an enlargement of selfishness, since they prize things because they belong to themselves, or they, in one sense, belong to the things. They take sides with themselves, but never with principles. That patriotism alone is pure, which would keep the country in the paths of truth, honor, and justice; and no man is empowered, in his zeal for his particular nation, any more than in his zeal for himself, to forget the law of right.

"I cannot prove I was out against Burgoyne, standing here where I am, certainly," I answered; "but give me an opportunity, and I will show it to your entire satisfaction."

"Which rijiment was on the right, Hazen's or Brookes's, in storming the Jarmans? Tell me that, and I will soon let you know whether I believe you or not."

"I cannot tell you that fact, for I was with my own battalion, and the smoke would not permit such a thing to be seen. I do not know that either of the corps you mention was in that particular part of the field that day, though I believe both to have been warmly engaged."

"He warnt there," drawled out Tobit, in his most dissatisfied manner, almost showing his teeth, like a dog, under the impulse of the hatred he felt.

"He was there!" cried Lowiny, positively; "I know he was there!"

A slap from Prudence taught the girl the merit of silence; but the men were too much interested to heed an interruption as characteristic and as bootless as this.

"I see how it is," added Thousandacres: "I must permit the chap a'ter all. Seein', however, that there is a chance of his having been out agin Burg'yne, I 'll permit him without writin's, and he shan't be bound. Tobit, take your prisoner away, and shut him up in the store-us. When your

brothers get back from their hunt a'ter the Injin, we'll detarmine among us what is to be done with him."

Thousandacres delivered his orders with dignity, and they were obeyed to the letter. I made no resistance, since it would only have led to a scuffle, in which I should have sustained the indignity of defeat, to say nothing of personal injuries. Tobit, however, did not offer personal violence, contenting himself with making a sign for me to follow him, which I did, followed in turn by his two double-jointed brothers. I will acknowledge that, as we proceeded toward my prison, the thought of flight crossed my mind; and I might have attempted it, but for the perfect certainty that, with so many on my heels, I must have been overtaken, when severe punishment would probably have been my lot. On the whole, I thought it best to submit for a time, and trust the future to Providence. As to remonstrance or deprecation, pride forbade my having recourse to either. I was not yet reduced so low as to solicit favors from a squatter.

The jail to which I was "permitted" by Thousandacres was a store-house, or, as he pronounced the word, a "store-us," of logs, which had been made of sufficient strength to resist depredations, let them come from whom they might, and they were quite as likely to come from some within as from any without. In consequence of its destination, the building was not ill-suited to become a jail. The logs, of course, gave a sufficient security against the attempts of a prisoner without tools or implements of any sort, the roof being made of the same materials as the sides. There was no window, abundance of air and light entering through the fissures of the rough logs, which had open intervals between them; and the only artificial aperture was the door. This last was made of stout planks, and was well secured by heavy hinges, and strong bolts and locks. The building was of some size, too,—twenty feet in length at least,—one end of it, though then quite empty, having been intended and used as a crib for the grain that we Americans call, *par excellence*, corn. Into this building I entered, after having the large knife that most woodsmen carry taken

from my pocket ; and a search was made on my person for any similar implement that might aid me in an attempt to escape.

In that day America had no paper money, from the Bay of Hudson to Cape Horn. Gold and silver formed the currency, and my pockets had a liberal supply of both, in the shape of joes and half-joes, dollars, halves, and quarters. Not a piece of coin, of any sort, was molested, however, these squatters not being robbers, in the ordinary signification of the term, but merely deluded citizens, who appropriated the property of others to their own use, agreeably to certain great principles of morals that had grown up under their own peculiar relations to the rest of mankind, their immediate necessities, and their convenience. I make no doubt that every member of the family of Thousand-acres would spurn the idea of his or her being a vulgar thief, drawing some distinctions in the premises as the Drakes, Morgans, Woodes, Rogers, and others of that school, drew between themselves and the vulgar every-day sea-robbers of the seventeenth century, though with far less reason. But robbers these squatters were not, except in one mode, and that mode they almost raised to the dignity of respectable hostilities, by the scale on which they transacted business.

I was no sooner "locked up" than I began a survey of my prison and the surrounding objects. There was no difficulty in doing either, the opening between the logs allowing of a clear reconnoissance on every side. With a view to keeping its contents in open sight, I fancy, the "store-us" was placed in the very centre of the settlement, having the mills, cabins, barns, sheds, and other houses encircling it in a sort of hamlet. This circumstance, which would render escape doubly difficult, was, notwithstanding, greatly in favor of reconnoitring. I will now describe the results of my observations. As a matter of course, my appearance, the announcement of my character, and my subsequent arrest, were circumstances likely to produce a sensation in the family of the squatter. All the women had gathered around Prudence, near the door of her cabin, and the

younger girls were attracted to that spot, as the particles of matter are known to obey the laws of affinity. The males, one boy of eight or ten years excepted, were collected near the mill, where Thousandacres, apparently, was holding a consultation with Tobit and the rest of the brotherhood, among whom, I fancy, was no one entitled to be termed an angel. Everybody seemed to be intently listening to the different speakers, the females often turning their eyes toward their male protectors, anxiously and with long protracted gazes. Indeed, many of them looked in that direction, even while they gave ear to the wisdom of Prudence herself.

The excepted boy had laid himself, in a lounging, American sort of an attitude, on a saw-log near my prison, and in a position that enabled him to see both sides of it, without changing his ground. By the manner in which his eyes were fastened on the "store-us" I was soon satisfied that he was acting in the character of a sentinel. Thus, my jail was certainly sufficiently secure, as the force of no man, unaided and without implements, could have broken a passage through the logs.

Having thus taken a look at the general aspect of things, I had leisure to reflect on my situation, and the probable consequences of my arrest. For my life I had no great apprehensions, not as much as I ought to have had, under the circumstances; but it did not strike me that I was in any great danger on that score. The American character, in general, is not bloodthirsty, and that of New England less so, perhaps, than that of the rest of the country. Nevertheless, in a case of property, the tenacity of the men of that quarter of the country was proverbial, and I came to the conclusion that I should be detained, if possible, until all the lumber could be got to market and disposed of, as the only means of reaping the fruit of past labor. The possibility depended on the escape or the arrest of Sureflint. Should that Indian be taken, Thousandacres and his family would be as secure as ever in their wilderness; but on the other hand, should he escape, I might expect to hear from my friends in the course of the day. By resorting to a requisition on

'Squire Newcome, who was a magistrate, my tenants might be expected to make an effort in my behalf, when the only grounds of apprehension would be the consequences of the struggle. The squatters were sometimes dangerous under excitement, and when sustaining each other, with arms in their hands, in what they fancied to be their hard-earned privileges. There is no end to the delusions of men on such subjects, self-interest seeming completely to blind their sense of right; and I have often met with cases in which parties who were trespassers, and in a moral view, robbers, *ab origine*, have got really to fancy that their subsequent labors (every new blow of the axe being an additional wrong) gave a sort of sanctity to possessions, in the defence of which they were willing to die. It is scarcely necessary to say that such persons look only at themselves, entirely disregarding the rights of others; but one wonders where the fruits of all the religious instruction of the country are to be found, when opinions so loose and acts so flagrant are constantly occurring among us. The fact is, land is so abundant, and such vast bodies lie neglected and seemingly forgotten by their owners, that the needy are apt to think indifference authorizes invasions on such unoccupied property; and their own labor once applied, they are quick to imagine that it gives them a moral and legal interest in the soil; though in the eye of the law, and of unbiassed reason, each new step taken in what is called the improvement of a "betterment" is but a further advance in the direction of wrong-doing.

I was reflecting on things of this sort, when, looking through the cracks of my prison, to ascertain the state of matters without, I was surprised by the appearance of a man on horseback, who was entering the clearing on its eastern side, seemingly quite at home in his course, though he was travelling without a footpath to aid him. As this man had a pair of the common saddle-bags of the day on his horse, I at first took him for one of those practitioners of the healing art who are constantly met with in the new settlements, winding their way through stumps, logs, morasses, and forests, the ministers of good or evil, I shall not pretend to say which. Ordinarily, families like that of Thousandacres do

their own "doctoring"; but a case might occur that demanded the wisdom of the licensed leech; and I had just decided in my own mind that this must be one, when, as the stranger drew nearer, to my surprise I saw that it was no other than my late agent, Mr. Jason Newcome, and the moral and physical factotum of Ravensnest!

As the distance between the mill that 'Squire Newcome leased of me, and that which Thousandacres had set up on the property of Mooseridge, could not be less than five-and-twenty miles, the arrival of this visitor at an hour so early was a certain proof that he had left his own house long before the dawn. It was probably convenient to pass through the farms and dwellings of Ravensnest on the errand on which he was now bent, at an hour of the night or morning when darkness would conceal the movement. By timing his departure with the same judgment, it was obvious he could reach home under the concealment of the other end of the same mantle. In a word, this visit was evidently one, in the objects and incidents of which it was intended that the world at large should have no share.

The dialogues between the members of the family of Thousandacres ceased, the moment 'Squire Newcome came in view; though, as was apparent by the unmoved manner in which his approach was witnessed, the sudden appearance of this particular visitor produced neither surprise nor uneasiness. Although it must have been a thing to be desired by the squatters, to keep their "location" a secret, more especially since the peace left landlords at leisure to look after their lands, no one manifested any concern at discovering this arrival in their clearing of the nearest magistrate. Any one might see, by the manner of men, women, and children, that 'Squire Newcome was no stranger, and that his presence gave them no alarm. Even the early hour of this visit was most probably that to which they were accustomed, the quick-witted intellects of the young fry causing them to understand the reason quite as readily as was the case with their seniors. In a word, the guest was regarded as a friend, rather than as an enemy.

Newcome was some little time, after he came into view,

in reaching the hamlet, if the cluster of buildings can be so termed; and when he did alight, it was before the door of a stable, towards which one of the boys now scampered, to be in readiness to receive his horse. The beast disposed of, the 'squire advanced to the spot where Thousandacres and his elder sons still remained to receive him, or that near the mill. The manner in which all parties shook hands, and the cordiality of the salutations generally, in which Prudence and her daughters soon shared, betokened something more than amity, I fancied, for it looked very much like intimacy.

Jason Newcome remained in the family group some eight or ten minutes, and I could almost fancy the prescribed inquiries about the "folks" (*anglice*, folk), the "general state of health," and the character of the "times," ere the magistrate and the squatter separated themselves from the rest of the party, walking aside like men who had matters of moment to discuss, and that under circumstances which could dispense with the presence of any listeners.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Peculiar both!
Our soil's strong growth
And our bold natives' hardy mind;
Sure Heaven bespoke
Our hearts and oak
To give a master to mankind."

YOUNG.

THOUSANDACRES and the magistrate held their way directly toward the store-house; and the log of the sentinel offering a comfortable seat, that functionary was dismissed, when the two worthies took his place, with their backs turned toward my prison. Whether this disposition of their persons was owing to a deep-laid plan of the squatter's, or not, I never knew; but, let the cause have been what it might, the effect was, to render me an auditor of nearly all that passed in the dialogue which succeeded. It will greatly aid the reader in understanding the incidents about to be recorded, if I spread on the record the language that passed between my late agent and one who was obviously his confidant in certain matters, if not in all that touched my interests in that quarter of the world. As for listening, I have no hesitation in avowing it, inasmuch as the circumstances would have justified me in taking far greater liberties with the customary obligations of society in its every-day aspect, had I seen fit so to do. I was dealing with rogues, who had me in their power, and there was no obligation to be particularly scrupulous on the score of mere conventional propriety, at least.

"As I was tellin' ye, Thousandacres," Newcome continued the discourse by saying, and that with the familiarity

of one who well knew his companion, "the young man is in this part of the country, and somewhere quite near you at this moment"— I was much nearer than the 'squire himself had any notion of at that instant—"yes, he 's out in the woods of this very property, with Chainbearer and his gang; and, for 'tinow" (for aught I know), "measuring out farms within a mile or two of this very spot!"

"How many men be there?" asked the squatter with interest. "If no more than the usual set, 't will be an onlucky day for them, should they stumble on my clearin'!"

"Perhaps they will, perhaps they won't; a body never knows. Surveyin' 's a sort o' work that leads a man here, or it leads him there. One never knows where a line will carry him, in the woods. That 's the reason I 've kept the critturs out of my own timber-land; for, to speak to you, Thousandacres, as one neighbor can speak to another without risk, there 's desp'rate large pine-trees on the unleased hills both north and east of my lot. Sometimes it 's handy to have lines about a mill, you know, sometimes 't is n't."

"A curse on all lines, in a free country, say I, 'squire," answered Thousandacres, who looked, as he bestowed this characteristic benediction, as if he might better be named *Ten*thousandacres; "they 're an invention of the devil. I lived seven whull years in Varmount State, as it 's now called, the old Hampshire Grants, you know, next-door neighbor to two families, one north and one south on me, and we chopped away the whull time, jest as freely as we pleased, and not a cross word or an angry look passed atween us."

"I rather conclude, friend Aaron, you had all sat down under the same title?" put in the magistrate, with a sly look at his companion. "When that is the case, it would exceed all reason to quarrel."

"Why, I 'll own that our titles were pretty much the same—possession and free axes. Then it was agin York colony landholders that our time was running. What 's your candid opinion about law, on this p'int, Squire Newcome?—I know you 're a man of edication, college l'arnt some say; though, I s'pose, that 's no better l'arnin' than any other, when a body has once got it—but what 's your

opinion about possession? Will it hold good for twenty-one years, without writin's, or not? Some say it will, and some say it won't."

"It won't. The law is settled; there must be a shadow of title, or possession's good for nothin'; no better than the scrapin's of a flour-barrel."

"I've heern say the opposyte of that; and there's reason why possession should count agin everything. By possession, however, I don't mean hangin' up a pair of saddle-bags on a tree, as is sometimes done, but goin' honestly and fairly in upon land, and cuttin' down trees, and buildin' mills and housen and barns, and cuttin' and slashin' and sawin' right and left, like all creation. That's what I always doos myself, and that's what I call sich a possession as ought to stand in law—ay, and in gospel, too; for I'm not one of them that flies in the face of religion."

"In that you're quite right; keep the gospel on your side, whatever you do, neighbor Thousandacres. Our Puritan fathers didn't cross the ocean, and encounter the horrors of the wilderness, and step on the rock of Plymouth, and undergo more than man could possibly bear, and that all for nothin'!"

"Wa-a-l, to my notion the 'horrors of the wilderness,' as you call 'em, is no great matter; though, as for crossin' the ocean, I can easily imagine that must be suthin' to try a man's patience and endurance. I never could take to the water. They tell me there isn't a single tree growin' the whull distance atween Ameriky and England! Floatin' saw-logs be sometimes met with, I've heern say, but not a standin' crittur of a tree from Massachusetts Bay to London town!"

"It's all water, and of course trees be scarce, Thousandacres; but let's come a little clusser to the p'int. As I was tellin' you, the whelp is in, and he'll growl as loud as the old bear himself, should he hear of all them boards you've got in the creek—to say nothin' of the piles up here that you haven't begun to put into the water."

"Let him growl," returned the old squatter, glancing surlily toward my prison; "like a good many other critturs

that I've met with, 't will turn out that his bark is worse than his bite."

"I don't know that, neighbor Thousandacres, I don't by any means know that. Major Littlepage is a gentleman of spirit and decision, as is to be seen by his having taken his agency from me, who have held it so long, and gi'n it to a young chap who has no other claim than bein' a tolerable surveyor ; but who has n't been in the settlement more than a twelvemonth."

"Gi'n it to a surveyor! Is he one of Chainbearer's measurin' devils ?"

"Just so ; 't is the very young fellow Chainbearer has had with him this year or so, runnin' lines and measurin' land on this very property."

"That old fellow, Chainbearer, had best look to himself! He 's thwarted me now three times in the course of his life, and he 's gettin' to be desp'rate old ; I 'm afeard he won't live long !"

I could now see that 'Squire Newcome felt uneasy. Although a colleague of the squatter's in what is only too apt to be considered a venal roguery in a new country, or in the stealing of timber, it did not at all comport with the scale of his rascality to menace a man's life. He would connive at stealing timber by purchasing the lumber at sufficiently low prices, so long as the danger of being detected was kept within reasonable limits, but he did not like to be connected with any transaction that did not, in the case of necessity, admit of a tolerably safe retreat from all pains and penalties. Men become very much what—not their laws—but what the administration of their laws makes them. In countries in which it is prompt, sure, and sufficiently severe, crimes are mainly the fruits of temptation and necessity ; but a state of society may exist, in which justice falls into contempt by her own impotency, and men are led to offend merely to brave her. Thus we have long labored under the great disadvantage of living under laws that, in a great degree, were framed for another set of circumstances. By the common law it was only trespass to cut down a tree in England, for trees were seldom or never

stolen, and the law did not wish to annex the penalties of felony to the simple offence of cutting a twig in a wood. With us, however, entire new classes of offences have sprung up under our own novel circumstances; and we probably owe a portion of the vast amount of timber-stealing that has now long existed among us, quite as much to the mistaken lenity of the laws, as to the fact that this particular description of property is so much exposed. Many a man would commit a trespass of the gravest sort, who would shrink from the commission of a felony of the lowest. Such was the case with Newcome. He had a certain sort of law-honesty about him, that enabled him in a degree to preserve appearances. It is true he connived at the unlawful cutting of timber by purchasing the sawed lumber, but he took good care, at the same time, not to have any such direct connection with the strictly illegal part of the transaction, as to involve him in the penalties of the law. Had timber-stealing been felony, he would have often been an accessory before the act; but in a case of misdemeanor, the law knows no such offence. Purchasing the sawed lumber, too, if done with proper precaution, owing to the glorious subterfuges permitted by "the perfection of reason," was an affair of no personal hazard in a criminal point of view, and even admitted of so many expedients as to leave the question of property a very open one, after the boards were fully in his own possession. The object of his present visit to the clearing of Thousandacres, as the reader will most probably have anticipated, was to profit by my supposed proximity, and to frighten the squatter into a sale on such terms as should leave larger profits than common in the hands of the purchaser. Unfortunately for the success of this upright project, my proximity was so much greater than even 'Squire Newcome supposed, as to put it in danger by the very excess of the thing that was to produce the result desired. Little did the honest magistrate suppose that I was, the whole time, within twenty feet of him, and that I heard all that passed.

"Chainbearer is about seventy," returned Newcome, after musing a moment on the character of his companion's

last remark. "Yes, about seventy, I should judge, from what I've heerd and what I know of the man. It's a good old age, but folks often live years and years beyond it. You must be suthin' like that, yourself, Thousandacres?"

"Seventy-three, every day and hour on't, 'squire; and days and hours well drawn out, too. If you count by old style, I b'lieve I'm a month or so older. But I'm not Chainbearer. No man can say of me, that I ever made myself troublesome to a neighborhood. No man can p'int to the time when I ever disturbed his lines. No man can tell of the day when I ever went into court to be a witness on such a small matter as the length or breadth of lots, to breed quarrels atween neighbors. No, 'Squire Newcome, I set store by my character, which will bear comparison with that of any other inhabitant of the woods I ever met with. And what I say of myself I can say of my sons and da'ghters, too—from Tobit down to Samson, from Nab to Jeruthy. We're what I call a reasonable and reconcilable breed, minding our own business, and having a respect for that of other people. Now, here am I, in my seventy-fourth year, and the father of twelve living children, and I've made, in my time, many and many a pitch on't, but never was I known to pitch on land that another man had in possession: and I carry my idees of possession further than most folks, too, for I call it possession to have said openly, and afore witnesses, that a man intends to pitch on any partic'lar spot afore next ploughin' or droppin' time, as the case may be. No, I respect possession, which ought to be the only lawful title to property, in a free country. When a man wants a clearin' or wants to make one, my doctrine is, let him look about him, and make his pitch on calkerlation; and when he's tired of the spot, and wants a change, let him sell his betterments, if he lights of a chap, and if he doos n't, let him leave 'em open, and clear off all incumbrances, for the next comer."

It is probable that Jason Newcome, Esq.—magistrates in America are extremely tenacious of this title, though they have no more right to it than any one else—but Jason

Newcome, Esq.,[1] did not carry his notions of the rights of squatters, and of the sacred character of possession, quite as far as did his friend Thousandacres. Newcome was an exceedingly selfish, but withal an exceedingly shrewd man. I do not know that the term clever, in its broadest signification, would fitly apply to him, for in that sense, I conceive, it means quickness and intelligence enough to do what is right; but he was fully entitled to receive it, under that qualification by which we say a man is "a clever rogue." In a word, Mr. Newcome understood himself, and his relations to the community in which he lived, too well to fall into very serious mistakes by a direct dereliction from his duties, though he lived in a never-ceasing condition of small divergencies that might at any time lead him into serious difficulties. Nevertheless, it was easy enough to see he had no relish for Thousandacres' allusions to the termination of the days of my excellent old friend, Chain-

[1] In order to understand Mr. Littlepage in what he says of "esquires," a word of explanation may be necessary. The term "esquire" is, as every well-informed person knows, a title of honor, standing next in degree below that of knight. On the continent of Europe the "ecuyer" properly infers nobility, I believe, as nobility is there considered, which is little if any more than the condition of the old English gentry, or of the families having coat-armor. By the English law, certain persons are born esquires, and others have the rank *ex officio*. Among the last is a justice of the peace, who is legally an "esquire" during his official term. Now, this rule prevailed in the colonies, and American magistrates were, perhaps legally, esquires, as well as the English. But titles of honor were abolished at the Revolution, and it is a singular contradiction, in substance, to hold that the principle is destroyed while the incident remains. The rank of esquire can no more legally exist in America, than that of knight. In one sense, neither is noble, it is true; but in that broad signification by which all constitutions are, or ought to be interpreted, both would come within the proscribed category, as set forth in art. 7th, sect. 9th, and art. 1st, sect. 10th, Const. U. S. Nevertheless, so much stronger is custom than positive law, that not only every magistrate, but every lawyer in the country fancies himself peculiarly an "esquire"! It is scarcely necessary to add that, by usage, the appellation is given by courtesy, wherever the English language is spoken, to all who are supposed to belong to the class of gentlemen. This, after all, is the only true American use of the word.—EDITOR.

bearer; nor can I say that they gave me any particular concern, for, while I knew how desperate the squatters sometimes became, I had a notion that this old fellow's bark would prove worse than his bite, as he had just observed of myself.

It would hardly repay the trouble, were I to attempt recording all that passed next between our two colloquists, although it was a sufficiently amusing exhibition of wily management to frighten the squatter to part with his lumber at a low price, on one side, and of sullen security on the other. The security proceeded from the fact that Thousandacres had me, at that very moment, a prisoner in his store-house.

A bargain conducted on such terms was not likely soon to come to a happy termination. After a great deal of chaffering and discussing, the conference broke up, nothing having been decided, by the magistrate's saying,—

"Well, Thousandacres, I hope you 'll have no reason to repent; but I kind o' fear you will."

"The loss will be mine and the b'ys' if I do," was the squatter's answer. "I know I can get all the boards into the creek, and, for that matter, into the river, afore young Littlepage can do me any harm; though there is one circumstance that may yet turn my mind—"

Here the squatter came to a pause; and Newcome, who had risen, turned short round, eagerly, to press the doubt that he saw was working in the other's mind.

"I thought you would think better of it," he said, "for it 's out of doubt, should Major Littlepage l'arn your pitch, that he 'd uproot you, as the winds uproot the fallin' tree."

"No, 'squire, my mind 's made up," Thousandacres coolly rejoined. "I 'll sell, and gladly; but not on the tarms you have named. Two pounds eight the thousand foot, board measure, and taking it all round, clear stuff and refuse, without any store-pay, will carry off the lumber."

"Too much, Thousandacres; altogether too much, when you consider the risks I run. I 'm not sartain that I could hold the lumber, even after I got it into the river; for a

replevy is a formidable thing in law, I can tell you. One pound sixteen, one third store-pay, is the utmost farthin' I can offer."

In that day all our calculations were in pounds, shillings, and pence.

"Then the bargain 's off. I s'pose, 'squire, you 've the old avarsion to being seen in my settlement?"

"Sartain—sartain," answered Newcome, in haste. "There 's no danger of that, I hope. You cannot well have strangers among you!"

"I won't answer for that. I see some of the b'ys coming out of the woods, yonder; and it seems to me there is a fourth man with them. There is, of a certainty; and it is no other than Susquesus, the Onondago. The fellow is cluss-mouthed, like most redskins; but you can say best whether you 'd like to be seen by him, or not. I hear he 's a great fri'nd of Chainbearer's."

It was very evident that the magistrate decided, at once, in the negative. With a good deal of decent haste he dodged round a pile of logs, and I saw no more of him until I caught a distant view of his person in the skirts of the woods, at the point whence he had issued into the clearing, two hours before, and where he now received his horse from the hands of the youngest of Thousandacres' sons, who led the animal to the spot for his especial accommodation. Mr. Newcome was no sooner in possession of his beast again, than he mounted and rode away into the depths of the forest. So adroitly was this retreat conducted, that no person of ordinary observation could possibly have detected it, unless indeed his attention had been previously drawn to the movement.

What passed, at parting, between Thousandacres and his visitor, I never knew; but they must have been altogether alone for a few minutes. When the former reappeared, he came out from behind the logs, his whole attention seemingly fastened on the approaching party, composed of his sons and Susquesus. Those resolute and practised men had, indeed, overtaken and captured the Onondago, and were now bringing him, a prisoner, unarmed, in their midst, to receive the

commands of their father! Notwithstanding all that I knew of this man, and of his character, there was something imposing in the manner in which he now waited for the arrival of his sons and their prisoner. Accustomed to exercise an almost absolute sway in his own family, the old man had acquired some of the dignity of authority; and as for his posterity, old and young, male and female, not excepting Prudence, they had gained very little in the way of freedom, by throwing aside the trammels of regular and recognized law, to live under the rule of their patriarch. In this respect they might be likened to the masses, who, in a blind pursuit of liberty, impatiently cast away the legal and healthful restraints of society, to submit to the arbitrary, selfish, and ever unjust dictation of demagogues. Whatever difference there might be between the two governments was in favor of that of the squatter, who possessed the feelings of nature in behalf of his own flesh and blood, and was consequently often indulgent.

It is so difficult to read an Indian's mind in his manner, that I did not expect to ascertain the state of the Onondago's feelings by the countenance he wore, on drawing near. In exterior, this man was as calm and unmoved as if just arrived on a friendly visit. His captors had bound him, fearful he might elude them, in some of the thickets they had been compelled to pass; but the thongs seemed to give him neither mental nor bodily concern. Old Thousandacres was stern in aspect; but he had too much experience in Indian character—knew too well the unforgiving nature of the Indians' dispositions, or the enduring memories that forgot neither favors nor injuries, to wantonly increase the feeling that must naturally have been awakened between him and his prisoner.

"Trackless," he said, considerately, "you 're an old warrior, and must know that in troubled times every man must look out for himself. I 'm glad the b'ys warn't driven to do you any harm; but it would never have done to let you carry the tidings of what has happened here, this morning, to Chainbearer and his gang. How long I may have to keep you, is more than I know myself; but your treatment

shall be good, and your welcome warm, so long as you give no trouble. I know what a redskin's word is; and maybe, a'ter thinkin' on it a little, I may let you out to wander about the clearin', provided you 'd give your parole not to go off. I 'll think on 't, and let you know to-morrow; but to-day I must put you in the store-us along with the young chap that you travelled here with."

Thousandacres then demanded of his sons an account of the manner in which they had taken their captive; which it is unnecessary to relate here, as I shall have occasion to give it directly in the language of the Indian himself. As soon as satisfied on this head, the door of my prison was opened, and the Onondago entered it, unbound, without manifesting the smallest shade of regret, or any resistance. Everything was done in a very lock-up sort of manner; the new prisoner being no sooner "permitted," than the door was secured, and I was left alone with Sureflint; one of the younger girls now remaining near the building as a sentinel. I waited a moment, to make certain we were alone, when I opened the communications with my friend.

"I am very sorry for this, Sureflint," I commenced, "for I had hoped your knowledge of the woods, and practice on trails, would have enabled you to throw off your pursuers, that you might have carried the news of my imprisonment to our friends. This is a sore disappointment to me; having made sure you would let Chainbearer know where I am."

"W'y t'ink different, now, eh? S'pose, 'cause Injin prisoner, can't help himself?"

"You surely do not mean that you are here with your own consent?"

"Sartain. S'pose no want to come; am no come. You t'ink T'ousandacres' b'ys catch Susquesus in woods, and he don't want to? Be sure, winter come, and summer come. Be sure, gray hair come a little. Be sure, Trackless get ole, by'm-by; but he moccasin leave no trail yet!"

"As I cannot understand why you should first escape, and then wish to come back, I must beg you to explain yourself. Let me know all that has passed, Sureflint—how it has

passed, and why it has passed. Tell it in your own way, but tell it fully."

"Sartain—why no tell? No harm; all good—some-t'ing capital! Nebber hab better luck."

"You excite my curiosity, Sureflint; tell the whole story at once, beginning at the time when you slipped off, and carrying it down to the moment of your arrival here."

Hereupon Susquesus turned on me a significant look, drew his pipe from his belt, filled and lighted it, and began to smoke with a composure that was not easily disturbed. As soon as assured that his pipe was in a proper state, however, the Indian quietly began his story.

"Now listen, you hear," he said. "Run away, 'cause no good to stay here, and be prisoner—dat why."

"But you are a prisoner, as it is, as well as myself; and, by your statement, a prisoner with your own consent."

"Sartain—nebber hab been prisoner, won't be prisoner, if don't want to. S'pose shot, den can't help him; but in woods, Injin nebber prisoner, 'less lazy, or drunk. Rum make great many prisoner."

"I can believe all this; but tell me the story. Why did you go off at first?"

"S'pose don't want Chainbearer knew where he be, eh? T'ink T'ousandacre ebber let you go while board in stream? When board go, he go; not afore. Stay all summer; want to live in store-us all summer, eh?"

"Certainly not—well, you left me, in order to let our friends know where I was, that they might cast about for the means of getting me free. All this I understand; what next?"

"Next, go off in wood. Easy 'nough to slip off when T'ousandacre no look. Well, went about two miles; leave no trail—bird make as much in air. What s'pose meet, eh?"

"I wait for you to tell me."

"Meet Jaap—yes—meet nigger. Look for young master; ebberybody in trouble, and won'er where young chief be. Some look here—some look out yonder—all look somewhere · Jaap look just dere"

"And you told Jaap the whole story, and sent him back to the huts with it!"

"Sartain—just so. Make good guess dat time. Den t'ink what do, next. Want to come back and help young pale-face frien'; so t'ought get take prisoner one time. Like to know how he feel to be prisoner one time. No feel so bad as s'pose. Squatter no hard master for prisoner."

"But how did all this happen, and in what manner have you misled the young men?"

"No hard to do at all. All he want is to know how. A'ter Jaap get his ar'n'd, and go off, made trail plain 'nough for squaw to find. Travel to a spring—sit down and put rifle away off, so no need shoot, and let him squatter's b'ys catch me, by what you call s'prise; yes, e' pale-faces s'prise redman dat time! Warrant he brag on 't well!"

Here, then, was the simple explanation of it all! Susquesus had stolen away, in order to apprise my friends of my situation; he had fallen in with Jaap, or Jaaf, in search of his lost master; and communicating all the circumstances to the negro, had artfully allowed himself to be recaptured, carefully avoiding a struggle, and had been brought back and placed by my side. No explanations were necessary to point out the advantages. By communicating with the negro, who had been familiar for years with the clipped manner of the Indian's mode of speaking English, everything would be made known to Chainbearer; by suffering himself to be taken, the squatters were led by Sureflint to suppose our capture and their "pitch" remained secrets; while, by rejoining me, I should have the presence, counsel, and assistance of a most tried friend of my father's and Chainbearer's in the event of necessity.

This brief summary of his reasoning shows the admirable sagacity of the Onondago, who had kept in view every requisite of his situation, and failed in nothing.

I was delighted with the address of Sureflint, as well as touched by his fidelity. In the course of our conversation he gave me to understand that my disappearance and absence for an entire night had produced great consternation in the huts, and that everybody was out in quest of me and

himself, at the time when he so opportunely fell in with Jaap.

"Gal out, too," added the Onondago, significantly. "S'pose good reason for dat."

This startled me a little, for I had a vague suspicion that Susquesus must have been an unseen observer of my interview with Ursula Malbone; and noticing my manner on rushing from her cabin, had been induced to follow me, as has been related. The reason is not to suppose that my late adventures had driven Dus from my mind. So far from this, I thought of her incessantly; and the knowledge that she took so much interest in me as to roam the woods in the search, had no tendency to lessen the steadiness or intensity of my reflections. Nevertheless, common humanity might induce one of her energy and activity to do as much as this; and had I not her own declaration that she was plighted to another!

After getting his whole story, I consulted the Indian on the subject of our future proceedings. He was of opinion that we had better wait the movements of our friends, from whom we must hear in some mode or other, in the course of the approaching night, or of the succeeding day. What course Chainbearer might see fit to pursue, neither of us could conjecture, though both felt assured he never would remain quiet with two as fast friends as ourselves in durance. My great concern was that he might resort at once to force, for old Andries had a fiery spirit, though one that was eminently just; and he had been accustomed to see gunpowder burned from his youth upward. Should he, on the other hand, resort to legal means, and apply to Mr. Newcome for warrants to arrest my captors, as men guilty of illegal personal violence, a course it struck me Frank Malbone would be very apt to advise, what might I not expect from the collusion of the magistrate, in the way of frauds, delays, and private machinations? In such a case there would be time to send me to some other place of concealment, and the forest must have a hundred such that were accessible to my new masters, while their friend Newcome would scarcely fail to let them have timely notice of

the necessity of some such step. Men acting in conformity with the rules of right, fulfilling the requirements of the law, and practising virtue, might be so remiss as not to send information of such an impending danger, for such persons are only too apt to rely on the integrity of their own characters, and to put their trust on the laws of Providence; but rogues, certain that they can have no such succor, depend mainly on themselves, recognizing the well-known principle of Frederick the Great, who thought it a safe rule to suppose that "Providence was usually on the side of strong battalions." I felt certain, therefore, that 'Squire Newcome would let his friends at the "clearing" know all that was plotting against them, as soon as he knew it himself.

The squatters were not unkind to us prisoners in the way of general treatment. Certainly I had every right to complain of the particular wrong they did me; but, otherwise, they were sufficiently considerate and liberal throughout that day. Our fare was their own. We had water brought in fresh by Lowiny no fewer than five several times; and so attentive to my supposed wants was this girl, that she actually brought me every book that was to be found in all the libraries of the family. These were but three—a fragment of a Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and an almanac that was four years old.

CHAPTER XX.

"I marked his desultory pace,
His gestures strange, and varying face,
With many a muttered sound;
And ah! too late, aghast, I viewed
The reeking blade, the hand imbrued:
He fell, and groaning grasped in agony the ground."
WARTON.

IN this manner passed that long and wearying day. I could and did take exercise, by walking to and fro in my prison; but the Indian seldom stirred, from the moment he entered. As for the squatter himself, he came no more near the store-house, though I saw him, two or three times in the course of the day, in private conference with his elder sons, most probably consulting on my case. At such moments, their manner was serious, and there were instants when I fancied it menacing.

Provision was made for our comfort by throwing a sufficient number of bundles of straw into the prison, and my fellow-captive and myself had each a sufficiently comfortable bed. A soldier was not to be frightened at sleeping on straw, moreover; and as for Susquesus, he asked for no more than room to stretch himself, though it were even on a rock. An Indian loves his ease, and takes it when it comes in his way; but it is really amazing to what an extent his powers of endurance go, when it becomes necessary for him to exert them.

In the early part of the night I slept profoundly, as I believe did the Indian. I must acknowledge that an uncomfortable distrust existed in my mind, that had some slight effect in keeping me from slumbering, though fatigue soon

overcame the apprehensions such a feeling would be likely to awaken. I did not know but Thousandacres and his sons might take it into their heads to make away with the Indian and myself under cover of the darkness, as the most effectual means of protecting themselves against the consequences of their past depredations, and of securing the possession of those that they had projected for the future. We were completely in their power, and, so far as the squatter knew, the secret of our visit would die with us; the knowledge those of his own flesh and blood possessed on the subject excepted. Notwithstanding these thoughts crossed my mind, and did give me some little uneasiness, they were not sufficiently active or sufficiently prominent to prevent me from slumbering, after I had fairly fallen asleep, without waking once, until it was three o'clock, or within an hour of the approach of day.

I am not certain that any external cause aroused me from my slumbers. But I well remember that I lay there on my straw, meditating for some time, half asleep and half awake, until I fancied I heard the musical voice of Dus, murmuring in my ear my own name. This illusion lasted some little time; when, as my faculties gradually resumed their powers, I became slowly convinced that some one was actually calling me, and by name too, within a foot or two of my ears. I could not be mistaken; the fact was so, and the call was in a woman's tones. Springing up, I demanded,—

"Who is here? In the name of Heaven, can this really be Miss Malbone—Dus!"

"My name is Lowiny," answered my visitor, "and I 'm Thousandacres' da'ghter. But don't speak so loud, for there is one of the b'ys on the watch at the other end of the store-us, and you 'll wake him up unless you 're careful."

"Lowiny, is it you, my good girl? Not content to care for us throughout the day, you still have a thought for us during the night!"

I thought the girl felt embarrassed, for she must have

been conscious of having a little trespassed on the usages and reserve of her sex. It is rare, indeed, that any mother, and especially an American mother, ever falls so low as completely to become unsexed in feelings and character, and rarer still that she forgets to impart many of the decencies of woman to her daughter. Old Prudence, notwithstanding the life she led, and the many causes of corruption and backslidings that existed around her, was true to her native instincts, and had taught to her girls many of those little proprieties that become so great charms in woman.

Lowiny was far from disagreeable in person, and had the advantage of being youthful in appearance, as well as in fact. In addition to these marks of her sex, she had manifested an interest in my fate, from the first, that had not escaped me; and here she was now, doubtless on some errand of which the object was our good. My remark embarrassed her, however, and a few moments passed before she got entirely over the feeling. As soon as she did, she again spoke.

"I don't think anything of bringing you and *the Injin* a little water," she said, laying an emphasis on the words I have put in Italics, "nor should I had we any beer or sap-cider instead. But all our spruce is out; and father said he wouldn't have any more of the cider made, seein' that we want all the sap for sugar. I hope you had a plentiful supply, Mr. Littlepage; and for fear you had n't, I've brought you and the redskin a pitcher of milk and a bowl of hasty-pudding—he can eat a'ter you 've done, you know."

I thanked my kind-hearted friend, and received her gift through a hole that she pointed out to me. The food, in the end, proved very acceptable, as subsequent circumstances caused our regular breakfast to be forgotten for a time. I was desirous of ascertaining from this girl what was said or contemplated among her relatives, on the subject of my future fate; but felt a nearly unconquerable dislike to be prying into what was a species of family secrets, by putting direct questions to her. Fortunately, the communicative and friendly disposition of Lowiny herself soon

removed all necessity for any such step ; for after executing her main purpose, she lingered with an evident wish to gossip.

"I wish father would n't be a squatter any longer," the girl said, with an earnestness that proved she was uttering her real sentiment. "It 's awful to be forever fighting agin law!"

"It would be far better if he would apply to some landowner and get a farm on lease, or by purchase. Land is so plenty in this country, no man need go without a legal interest in his hundred acres, provided he be only sober and industrious."

"Father never drinks, unless it 's on the Fourth of July ; and the b'ys be all pretty sober, too, as young men go, nowadays. I believe, Mr. Littlepage, if mother has told father once she has told him a thousand times, that she doos wish he 'd leave off squatting and take writin's for some piece of land or other. But father says, 'no—he warn't made for writin's, nor writin's for him.' He 's desp'ately troubled to know what to do with you, now he 's got you."

"Did Mr. Newcome give no opinion on the subject, while he was with you?"

"'Squire Newcome! Father never let on to him a syllable about ever having seen you. He knows too much to put himself in 'Squire Newcome's power, sin' his lumber would go all the cheaper for it. What 's your opinion, Mr. Littlepage, about our right to the boards, when we 've cut and hauled and sawed the logs with our own hands. Don't that make some difference?"

"What is your opinion of your right to a gown that another girl has made out of calico she had taken from your drawer, when your back was turned, and carried away, and cut and stitched and sewed with her own hands?"

"She never would have any right to my calico, let her cut it as much as she might. But lumber is made out of trees."

"And trees have owners just as much as calico. Hauling and cutting and sawing can of themselves give no man a right to another man's logs."

"I was afeard it was so," answered Lowiny, sighing so loud as to be heard. "There's suthin' in that old Bible I lent you that I read pretty much in that way; though Tobit and most of the b'ys say it don't mean any sich thing. They say there's nothin' about lumber in the Bible, at all."

"And what does your mother tell you on this head?"

"Why, mother don't talk about it. She wants father to lease or buy; but you know how it is with women, Mr. Littlepage; when their fri'nds act, it's all the same as a law to them to try to think that they act right. Mother never says anything to us about the lawfulness of father's doin's, though she often wishes he would live under writin's. Mother wants father to try and get writin's of you, now you're here, and in his hands. Would n't you give us writin's, Mr. Littlepage, if we'd promise to give you suthin' for rent?"

"If I did, they would be good for nothing, unless I were free, and among friends. Deeds and leases got from men who are 'in the hands,' as you call it, of those who take them, are of no value."

"I'm sorry for that," rejoined Lowiny, with another sigh; "not that I wanted you to be driven into anything, but I thought if you would only consent to let father have writin's for this clearin', it's so good a time to do it now, 't would be a pity to lose it. If it can't be done, however, it can't, and there's no use in complaining. Father thinks he can hold you till the water rises in the fall, and the b'ys have run all the lumber down to Albany; a'ter which, he 'll not be so partic'lar about keepin' you any longer, and maybe he 'll let you go."

"Hold me until the water rises! Why that will not take place these three months!"

"Well, Mr. Littlepage, three months don't seem to me sich a desp'rate long time, when a body is among fri'nds. We should treat you as well as we know how, that you may depend on—I 'll answer for it, you shall want for nothin' that we've got to give."

"I dare say, my excellent girl, but I should be extremely

sorry to trouble your family with so long a visit. As for the boards, I have no power to waive the rights of the owners of the land to that property; my power being merely to sell lots to actual settlers."

"I 'm sorry to hear that," answered Lowiny in a gentle tone, that fully confirmed her words; "for father and the b'ys be really awful about anything that touches their profits for work done. They say their flesh and blood 's in them boards, and flesh and blood shall go afore the boards shall go. It makes my blood run cold to hear the way they do talk! I 'm not a bit skeary; and last winter, when I shot the bear that was a'ter the store-hogs, mother said I acted as well as she could have done herself, and she has killed four bears and near upon twenty wolves, in her time. Yes, mother said I behaved like her own da'ghter, and that she set twice the store by me that she did before."

"You are a brave girl, Lowiny, and an excellent one in the main, I make no question. Whatever become of me, I shall not forget your kindness as long as I live. It will be a very serious matter, however, to your friends, to attempt keeping me here three or four months, as mine will certainly have a search for me, when this clearing would be found. I need not tell you what would be the consequence."

"What can—what will father and the b'ys do? I can't bear to think on 't—oh! they 'll not have the hearts to try to put you out of the way!"

"I should hope not, for their own sakes, and for the credit of the American name. We are not a nation addicted to such practices, and I should really regret to learn that we have made so long a step toward the crimes of older countries. But there is little danger of anything of the sort, after all, my good Lowiny."

"I hope so, too," the girl answered in a low, tremulous voice; "though Tobit is a starn bein' sometimes. He makes father worse than he would be, if let alone, I know. But I must go, now. It 's near daylight, and I hear 'em stirring in Tobit's house. It would cost me dear, did any on 'em know I had been out of my bed, talking to you."

As this was said, the girl vanished. Before I could find

an aperture to watch her movements she had disappeared. Susquesus arose a few minutes later, but he never made any allusion to the secret visit of the girl. In this respect, he observed the most scrupulous delicacy, never letting me know by hint, look, or smile, that he had been in the least conscious of her presence.

Day came as usual, but it did not find these squatters in their beds. They appeared with the dawn, and most of them were at work ere the broad light of the sun was shed on the forest. Most of the men went down into the river, and busied themselves, as we supposed, for we could not see them, in the water, with the apples of their eyes, their boards. Old Thousandacres, however, chose to remain near his habitation, keeping two or three well-grown lads about him; probably adverting in his mind to the vast importance it was to all of his race, to make sure of his prisoners. I could see by the thoughtful manner of the old squatter, as he lounged around his mill, among his swine, and walked through his potatoes, that his mind wavered greatly as to the course he ought to pursue, and that he was sorely troubled. How long this perplexity of feeling would have continued, and to what it might have led, it is hard to say, had it not been cut short by an incident of a very unexpected nature, and one that called for more immediate decision and action. I shall relate the occurrence a little in detail.

The day was considerably advanced, and, Thousandacres and the girl who then watched the storehouse excepted, everybody was occupied. Even Susquesus had picked up a piece of birch, and with a melancholy countenance, that I fancied was shadowing forth the future life of a half-civilized redman, was attempting to make a broom with a part of a knife that he had found in the building; while I was sketching, on a leaf of my pocket-book, the mill and a bit of mountain land that served it for a background. Thousandacres, for the first time that morning, drew near our prison, and spoke to me. His countenance was severe, yet I could see he was much troubled. As I afterward ascertained, Tobit had been urging on him the necessity of putting

both myself and the Indian to death, as the only probable means that offered to save the lumber.

"Young man," said Thousandacres, "you have stolen on me and mine like a thief at night, and you ought to expect the fate of one. How in natur' can you expect men will give up their hard 'arnin's without a struggle and a fight for 'em? You tempt me more than I can bear!"

I felt the fearful import of these words; but human nature revolted at the thought of being cowed into any submission, or terms unworthy of my character or late profession. I was on the point of making an answer in entire consonance with this feeling, when, in looking through the chinks of my prison to fasten an eye on my old tyrant, I saw Chainbearer advancing directly toward the store-house, and already within a hundred yards of us. The manner in which I gazed at this apparition attracted the attention of the squatter, who turned and first saw the unexpected visitor who approached. At the next minute, Andries was at his side.

"So, T'ousantacres, I fint you here!" exclaimed Chainbearer. "It 's a goot many years since you and I met, and I 'm sorry we meet now on such pisiness as t'is!"

"The meetin' s of your own seekin', Chainbearer. I 've neither invited nor wished for your company."

"I p'lieve you wit' all my heart. No, no; you wish for no chains and no chainpearers, no surfeyors and no compasses, no lots and no owners, too, put a squatter. You and I haf not to make an acquaintance for t'e first time, T'ousantacres, after knowin' each other for fifty years."

"Yes, we do know each other for fifty years; and seein' that them years have n't sarved to bring us of a mind on any one thing, we should have done better to keep apart, than to come together now."

"I haf come for my poy, squatter—my nople poy whom you haf illegally arrestet, and mate a prisoner in the teet' of all law and justice. Gif me pack Mortaunt Littlepage, and you 'll soon be rit of my company!"

"And how do you know that I 've ever seen your 'Mortaunt Littlepage'? What have I to do with your boy,

that you seek him of me? Go your ways, go your ways, old Chainbearer, and let me and mine alone. The world 's wide enough for us both, I tell you; and why should you be set on your own ondoin', by runnin' agin a breed like that which comes of Aaron and Prudence Timberman?"

"I care not for you or your preet," answered old Andries, sternly. "You 've daret to arrest my frient, against law and right, and I come to demant his liperty, or to warn you of t'e consequences."

"Don't press me too far, Chainbearer, don't press me too far. There 's desp'rate critturs in this clearin', and them that is n't to be driven from their righteous 'arnin's by any that carry chains or p'int compasses. Go your way, I tell ye, and leave us to gather the harvest that comes of the seed of your own sowin' and plantin'."

"Ye 'll gat'er it, ye 'll gat'er it all, T'ousantacres—you and yours. Ye 've sown t'e wint, and ye 'll reap t'e whirlwint, as my niece Dus Malpone has reat to me often, of late. Ye 'll gat'er in all your harvest, tares ant all, ye will; and t'at sooner t'an ye t'ink for."

"I wish I 'd never seen the face of the man! Go away, I tell you, Chainbearer, and leave me to my hard 'arnin's."

"Earnin's! Do you call it earnin's to chop and pillage on anot'er's lants, and to cut his trees into logs, and to saw his logs into poarts, and to sell his poarts to speculators, and gif no account of your profits to t'e rightful owner of it all? Call you such t'ievin' righteous earnin's?"

"Thief back ag'in, old measurer! Do not the sweat of the brow, long and hard days of toil, achin' bones, and hungry bellies, give a man a claim to the fruit of his labors?"

"T'at always hast peen your failin', T'ousantacres; t'at 's t'e very p'int on which you've proken town, man. You pegin wit' your morals, at t'e startin'-place t'at 's most convenient to yourself and your plunterin' crew, insteat of goin' pack to t'e laws of your Lort and Master. Reat what t'e Almighty Got of heaven ant 'art' sait unto Moses, ant you 'll fint t'at you 've not turnet over leafs enough of your piple. You may chop ant you may hew, you may

haul ant you may saw, from t'is day to t'e ent of time, and you 'll nefer pe any nearer to t'e right t'an you are at t'is moment. T'e man t'at starts on his journey wit' his face in t'e wrong direction, olt, T'ousantacres, wilt nefer reach its ent; t'ough he trafel 'till t'e sweat rolls from his poty like water. You pegin wrong, olt man, and you must ent wrong."

I saw the cloud gathering in the countenance of the squatter, and anticipated the outbreaking of the tempest that followed. Two fiery tempers had met, and, divided as they were in opinions and practice by the vast chasm that separates principles from expediency, right from wrong, honesty from dishonesty, and a generous sacrifice of self to support the integrity of a noble spirit, from a homage to self that confounded and overshadowed all sense of right, it was not possible that they should separate without a collision. Unable to answer Chainbearer's reasoning, the squatter resorted to the argument of force. He seized my old friend by the throat and made a violent effort to hurl him to the earth. I must do this man of violence and evil the justice to say, that I do not think it was his wish at that moment to have any assistance; but the instant the struggle commenced the conch blew, and it was easy to predict that many minutes would not elapse, before the sons of Thousandacres would be pouring in to the rescue. I would have given a world to be able to throw down the walls of my prison, and rush to the aid of my sterling old friend. As for Susquesus, he must have felt a lively interest in what was going on, but he remained as immovable, and seemingly as unmoved, as a rock.

Andries Coejemans, old as he was, and it will be remembered he too had seen his threescore years and ten, was not a man to be taken by the throat with impunity. Thousandacres met with a similar assault, and a struggle followed that was surprisingly fierce and well contested, considering that both the combatants had completed the ordinary limits of the time of man. The squatter gained a slight advantage in the suddenness and vigor of his assault, but Chainbearer was still a man of formidable physical power. In his

prime few had been his equals ; and Thousandacres soon had reason to know that he had met more than his match. For a single instant Chainbearer gave ground ; then he rallied, made a desperate effort, and his adversary was hurled to the earth with a violence that rendered him for a short time insensible ; old Andries himself continuing erect as one of the neighboring pines, red in the face, frowning, and more severe in aspect than I remembered ever to have seen him before, even in battle.

Instead of pushing his advantage, Chainbearer did not stir a foot after he had thrown off his assailant. There he remained, lofty in bearing, proud, and stern. He had reason to believe no one was a witness of his prowess, but I could see that the old man had a soldier's feelings at his victory. At this instant I first let him know my close proximity by speaking.

"Fly—for your life take to the woods, Chainbearer," I called to him, through the chinks. "That conch will bring all the tribe of the squatter upon you in two or three minutes ; the young men are close at hand, in the stream below the mill, at work on the logs, and have only the banks to climb."

"Got be praiset! Mortaunt, my tear poy, you are not injuret, t'en! I will open t'e toor of your prison, and we will retreat toget'er."

My remonstrances were vain. Andries came round to the door of the store-house, and made an effort to force it open. That was not easy, however ; for, opening outward, it was barred with iron, and secured by a stout lock. Chainbearer would not listen to my remonstrances, but he looked around him for some instrument by means of which he could either break the lock or draw the staple. As the mill was at no great distance, away he went in that direction, in quest of what he wanted, leaving me in despair at his persevering friendship. Remonstrance was useless, however, and I was compelled to await the result in silence.

Chainbearer was still a very active man. Nature, early training, sobriety of life in the main, and a good constitution, had done this much for him. It was but a moment

before I saw him in the mill, looking for the crowbar. This he soon found, and he was on his way to the store-house, in order to apply this powerful lever, when Tobit came in sight, followed by all the brethren, rushing up the bank like a pack of hounds in close pursuit. I shouted to my friend again to fly, but he came on steadily toward my prison, bent on the single object of setting me free. All this time, Thousandacres was senseless, his head having fallen against a corner of the building. Chainbearer was so intent on his purpose that, though he must have seen the crowd of young men, no less than six in number, including well-grown lads, that was swiftly advancing toward him, he did not bestow the least attention on them. He was actually busied with endeavoring to force the bar in between the hasp and the post, when his arms were seized behind, and he was made a prisoner.

Chainbearer was no sooner apprised of the uselessness of resistance, that he ceased to make any. As I afterward learned from himself, he had determined to become a captive with me, if he could not succeed in setting me free. Tobit was the first to lay hands on the Chainbearer; and so rapidly were things conducted, for it happened this man had the key, that the door was unbarred, opened, and old Andries was thrust into the cage, almost in the twinkling of an eye. The rapidity of the movement was doubtless aided by the acquiescent feeling that happened to be uppermost in the mind of Chainbearer, at that precise moment.

No sooner was this new prisoner secured, than the sons of Thousandacres raised their father's body, and bore it to his own residence, which was but a few yards distant. Old and young, both sexes and all ages, collected in that building; and there was an hour during which we appeared to be forgotten. The sentinel, who was a son of Tobit's, deserted his post; and even Lowiny, who had been hovering in sight of the store-house the whole morning, seemed to have lost her interest in us. I was too much engaged with my old friend, and had too many questions to ask and to answer, however, to care much for this desertion; which, moreover, was natural enough for the circumstances.

"I rejoice you are not in the hands of that pack of wolves, my good friend!" I exclaimed, after the first salutations had passed between Andries and myself, and squeezing his hand again and again. "They are very capable of any act of violence; and I feared the sight of their father, lying there insensible, might have inflamed them to some deed of immediate violence. There will now be time for reflection, and fortunately, I am a witness of all that passed."

"No fear for olt T'ousantacres," said Chainbearer, heartily. "He is tough, and is only a little stunnet, pecause he t'ought himself a petter man t'an he ist. Half an hour will pring him rount, and make him as good a man ast he ever wast. But, Mortaunt, lat, how came you here, and why wast you wantering about t'e woods at night, with Trackless, here, who ist a sensiple retskin, and ought to haf set you a petter example?"

"I was hot and feverish, and could not sleep; and so I took a stroll in the forest, and got lost. Luckily, Susquesus had an eye on me, and kept himself at hand the whole time. I was obliged to catch a nap in the top of a fallen tree, and when I woke in the morning, the Onondago led me here in quest of something to eat, for I was hungry as a famished wolf."

"Tid Susquesus, t'en, know of squatters having mate t'eir pitch on t'is property?" asked Andries, in some surprise, and as I thought, a little sternly.

"Not he. He heard the saw of the mill in the stillness of night, and we followed the direction of that sound, and came unexpectedly out on this settlement. As soon as Thousandacres ascertained who I was, he shut me up here; and as for Susquesus, Jaap has doubtless told you the story he was commissioned to relate."

"All fery true, lat, all fery true; t'ought I don't half understant, yet, why you shoult haf left us in t'e manner you tit, and t'at, too after hafin' a long talk wit' Dus. T'e gal is heart-heafy, Mortaunt, as 't is plain to pe seen; put I can't get a syllaple from her t'at hast t'e look of a rational explanation. I shall haf to ask you to tell t'e story, lat.

I was tryin' to get t'e trut' out of Dus, half of t'e way comin' here; but a gal is as close as—"

"Dus!" I interrupted; "half the way coming here. You do not, cannot mean that Dus is with you?"

"Hist, hist—pe careful. You speak too lout. I coult wish not to let t'ese scountrels of squatters know t'at t'e gal is so exposet, put here she ist; or, what is much t'e same, she is in t'e woots out yonter, a looker-on, and I fear must pe in consarn at seein' t'at I, too, am a prisoner."

"Chainbearer, how could you thus expose your niece—thus bring her into the very grasp of lawless ruffians?"

"No, Mortaunt, no—t'ere is no fear of her peing insultet, or anyt'ing of t'at sort. One can reat of such t'ings in pooks, put woman is respectet ant not insultet in America. Not one of T'ousantacres' rascals woult wount t'e ear of t'e gal wit' an improper wort, hat he a chance, which not one of 'em hast, seein' nopody knows t'e gal is wit' me, put ourselves. Come she woult, and t'ere wast no use in saying her nay. Dus is a goot creature, Mortaunt, and a tutiful gal; put it's as easy to turn a rifer up-stream, as to try to holt her pack when she loves."

"Is that her character?" I thought. "Then is there little chance, indeed, of her ever becoming mine, since her affections must have gone with her troth." Nevertheless, my interest in the noble-hearted girl was just as strong as if I held her faith, and she was to become mine in a few weeks. The idea that she was at that moment waiting the return of her uncle, in the woods, was agony to me; but I had sufficient self-command to question the Chainbearer, until I got out of him all of the following facts:

Jaap had carried the message of Susquesus, with great fidelity, to those to whom the Indian had sent it. On hearing the news, and the manner of my arrest, Andries called a council, consisting of himself, Dus, and Frank Malbone. This occurred in the afternoon of the previous day; and that same night, Malbone proceeded to Ravensnest, with a view of obtaining warrants for the arrest of Thousandacres and his gang, as well as of procuring assistance to bring them all

in, in expectation of having the whole party transferred to the jail at Sandy Hill. As the warrant could be granted only by Mr. Newcome, I could easily see that the messenger would be detained a considerable time, since the magistrate would require a large portion of the present day to enable him to reach his house. This fact, however, I thought it well enough to conceal from my friend at the moment.

Early that morning, Chainbearer, Dus, and Jaap had left the huts, taking the nearest route to the supposed position of the clearing of Thousandacres, as it had been described by the Indian. Aided by a compass, as well as by their long familiarity with the woods, this party had little difficulty in reaching the spot where the Onondago and the negro had met; after which, the remainder of the journey was through a *terra incognita*, as respects the adventurers. With some search, however, a glimpse was got of the light of the clearing, much as one finds an island in the ocean, when the skirts of the wood were approached. A favorable spot, one that possessed a good cover, was selected, whence Chainbearer reconnoitered for near an hour before he left it. After a time he determined on the course he adopted and carried out, leaving his niece to watch his movements, with instructions to rejoin her brother, should he himself be detained by the squatter. I was a little relieved by the knowledge of the presence of Jaap, for I knew the fidelity of the fellow too well to suppose he would ever desert Dus; but my prison became twice as irksome to me after I had heard this account of Chainbearer's, as it had been before.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Was she not all my fondest wish could frame?
Did ever mind so much of heaven partake?
Did she not love me with the purest flame?
And give up friends and fortune for my sake?
Though mild as evening skies,
With downcast, streaming eyes,
Stood the stern frown of supercilious brows,
Deaf to their brutal threats, and faithful to her vows."

SHAW.

DUS was then near me—in sight of the store-house, perhaps! But affection for her uncle, and no interest in me, had brought her there. I could respect her attachment to her old guardian, however, and admire the decision and spirit she had manifested in his behalf, at the very moment the consciousness that I had no influence on her movements was the most profound.

"T'e gal woult come, Mortaunt," the Chainbearer continued, after having gone through his narrative; "ant, if you know Dus, you know when she loves she wilt not be deniet. Got pless me! what a wife she woult make for a man who wast desarfin' of her! Oh! here 's a pit of a note t'e dear creature has written to one of T'ousantacres' poys, who hast peen out among us often, t'ough I never so much as dreamet t'at t'e squatting olt rascal of a fat'er was on our lant, here. Well, Zepaniah, as t'e lat is callet, hast passet much time at t'e 'Nest, working apout in t'e fielts, and sometimes for us; and, to own the trut' to you, Mortaunt, I do pelieve t'e young chap hast a hankerin' a'ter Dus, and would pe glat enough to get t'e gal for a wife."

"He! Zephaniah Thousandacres—or whatever his in-

fernal name may be—he a hankering or an attachment for Ursula Malbone—he think of her for a wife—he presume to love such a perfect being!"

"Hoity, toity!" cried old Andries, looking round at me in surprise, "why should n't t'e poy haf his feelin's ast well ast anot'er, if he pe a squatter? Squatters haf feelin's t'ough t'ey haf n't much honesty to poast of. Ant, ast for honesty, you see, Mortaunt, it is tifferent petween T'ousantacres and his poys. T'e lats haf peen prought up to fancy t'ere ist no great harm in lif'ing on anot'er man's lants, where ast t'is olt rascal, t'eir fat'er, wast prought up, or t'inks he wast prought up, in t'e very sanctum sanctorum of gotliness among t'e Puritans, and t'at t'e eart' hast not t'eir equals in religion, I 'll warrant you. Ask olt Aaron apout his soul, and he 'll tell you t'at it 's a petter soul t'an a Dutch soul, and t'at it won't purn at all, it 's so free from eart'. Yes, yes—t'at ist t'e itee wit' 'em all in his part of t'e worlt. T'eir gotliness ist so pure even sin wilt do it no great harm."

I knew the provincial prejudices of Chainbearer too well to permit myself to fall into a discussion on theology with him, just at that moment; though I must do the old man the justice to allow that his opinion of the self-righteousness of the children of the Puritans was not absolutely without some apology. I never had any means of ascertaining the fact, but it would have occasioned me no surprise had I discovered that Thousandacres, and all his brood, looked down on us New Yorkers as an especially fallen and sinful race, which was on the high road to perdition, though encouraged and invited to enter on a different road by the spectacle of a chosen people so near them, following the straight and narrow path that leads to heaven. This mingling of God and Mammon is by no means an uncommon thing among us, though the squatters would probably have admitted themselves that they had fallen a little away, and were by no means as good as their forefathers had once been. There is nothing that sticks so close to an individual, or to a community, as the sense of its own worth. As "coming events cast their shadows before," this

sentiment leaves its shadows behind, long after the substance which may have produced them has moved onward, or been resolved into the gases. But I must return to Zephaniah and the note.

"And you tell me, Chainbearer, that Ursula has actually written a note, a letter, to this young man?" I asked, as soon as I could muster resolution enough to put so revolting a question.

"Sartain; here it ist, and a very pretty lookin' letter it is, Mortaunt. Dus does everyt'ing so hantily, and so like a nice young woman, t'at it ist a pleasure to carry one of her letters. Ay—t'ere t'e lat ist now, and I 'll just call him, and gif him his own."

Chainbearer was as good as his word, and Zephaniah soon stood at the door of the store-house.

"Well, you wilt own, Zeph," continued the old man, "we didn 't cage you like a wilt peast, or a rogue t'at hast been mettlin' wit' what tid n't pelong to him, when you wast out among us. T'ere is t'at difference in t'e treatment—put no matter! Here ist a letter for you, and much goot may it do you! It comes from one who vilt gif goot atvice; ant you 'll be none the worse if you follow it. I don't know a wort t'at 's in it, put you 'll fint it a goot letter, I 'll answer for it. Dus writes peautiful letters, and in a hand almost as plain and hantsome as his Excellency's, t'ough not quite so large. Put her own hant is n't as large as his Excellency's t'ough his Excellency's hant was n't particularly pig neit'er."

I could scarcely believe my senses! Here was Ursula Malbone confessedly writing a letter to a son of Thousandacres, the squatter, and that son admitted to be her admirer! Devoured by jealousy, and a thousand feelings to which I had hitherto been a stranger, I gazed at the fortunate being who was so strangely honored by this communication from Dus, with the bitterest envy. Although to own the truth, the young squatter was a well-grown, good-looking fellow, to me he seemed to be the very personification of coarseness and vulgarity. It will readily be supposed that Zephaniah was not entirely free from some very just imputations of the latter character; but on the whole, most girls

of his own class in life would be quite content with him in these respects. But Ursula Malbone was not at all of his own class in life. However reduced in fortune, she was a lady, by education as well as by birth; and what feelings could there possibly be in common between her and her strange admirer? I had heard it said that women were as often taken by externals as men; but in this instance the externals were coarse, and nothing extraordinary. Some females, too, could not exist without admiration; and I had known Dus but a few weeks, after all, and it was possible I had not penetrated the secret of her true character. Then her original education had been in the forest; and we often return to our first loves, in these particulars, with a zest and devotion for which there is no accounting. It was possible this strange girl might have portrayed to her imagination, in the vista of the future, more of happiness and wild enjoyment among the woods and ravines of stolen clearings, than by dwelling amid the haunts of men. In short, there was scarce a conceit that did not crowd on my brain, in that moment of intense jealousy and profound unhappiness. I was as miserable as a dog.

As for Zephaniah, the favored youth of Ursula Malbone, he received his letter, as I fancied, with an awkward surprise, and lounged round a corner of the building, to have the pleasure, as it might be, of reading it to himself. This brought him nearer to my position; for I had withdrawn, in a disgust I could not conquer, from being near the scene that had just been enacted.

Opening a letter, though it had been folded by the delicate hands of Ursula Malbone, and reading it, were two very different operations, as Zephaniah now discovered. The education of the young man was very limited, and after an effort or two, he found it impossible to get on. With the letter open in his hand, he found it as much a sealed book to him as ever. Zephaniah could read writing, by dint of a considerable deal of spelling; but it must not be a good hand. As some persons cannot comprehend pure English, so he found far more difficulty in spelling out the pretty, even characters before him, than would have been the case

had he been set at work on the pot-hooks and trammels of one of his own sisters. Glancing his eyes around in quest of aid, they happened to fall on mine, which were watching his movements with the vigilance of a feline animal, through the chinks of the logs, and at the distance of only three feet from his own face. As for the Indian, he, seemingly, took no more note of what was passing, than lovers take of time in a stolen interview; though I had subsequently reason to believe that nothing had escaped his observation. Andries was in a distant part of the prison, reconnoitering the clearing and mills with an interest that absorbed all his attention for the moment. Of these facts Zephaniah assured himself by taking a look through the openings of the logs; then sidling along nearer to me he said in a low voice,—

"I don't know how it is, but to tell you the truth, Major Littlepage, York larnin' and Varmount larnin' be so different, that I don't find it quite as easy to read this letter as I could wish."

On this hint I received the epistle, and began to read it in a low tone; for Zephaniah asked this much of me, with a delicacy of feeling that, in so far, was to his credit. As the reader may have some of the curiosity I felt myself, to know what Ursula Malbone could possibly have to say in this form to Zephaniah Thousandacres, I shall give the contents of this strange epistle in full. It was duly directed to "Mr. Zephaniah Timberman, Mooseridge," and in that respect would have passed for any common communication. Within, it read as follows:

"Sir:

"As you have often professed a strong regard for me, I now put you to the proof of the sincerity of your protestations. My dear uncle goes to your father, whom I only know by report, to demand the release of Major Littlepage, who, we hear, is a prisoner in the hands of your family, against all law and right. As it is possible the business of uncle Chainbearer will be disagreeable to Thousandacres, and that warm words may pass between them, I ask of your friendship some efforts to keep the peace; and, particularly,

should anything happen to prevent my uncle from returning, that you would come to me in the woods—for I shall accompany the Chainbearer to the edge of your clearing—and let me know it. You will find me there, attended by one of the blacks, and we can easily meet if you cross the fields in an eastern direction, as I will send the negro to find you and to bring you to me.

"In addition to what I have said above, Zephaniah, let me also earnestly ask your care in behalf of Major Littlepage. Should any evil befall that gentleman, it would prove the undoing of your whole family! The law has a long arm, and it will reach into the wilderness, as well as into a settlement. The person of a human being is a very different thing from a few acres of timber, and General Littlepage will think far more of his noble son than he will think of all the logs that have been cut and floated away. Again and again, therefore, I earnestly entreat of you to befriend this gentleman, not only as you hope for my respect, but as you hope for your own peace of mind. I have had some connection with the circumstances that threw Mr. Littlepage into your hands, and shall never know a happy moment again should anything serious befall him. Remember this, Zephaniah, and let it influence your own conduct. I owe it to myself and to you to add, that the answer I gave you at Ravensnest, the evening of the raising, must remain my answer, now and forever; but, if you have really the regard for me that you then professed, you will do all you can to serve Major Littlepage, who is an old friend of my uncle's, and whose safety, owing to circumstances that you would fully understand were they told to you, is absolutely necessary to my future peace of mind.

"Your friend, URSULA MALBONE."

What a strange girl was this Dus! I suppose it is unnecessary to say that I felt profoundly ashamed of my late jealousy, which now seemed just as absurd and unreasonable as, a moment before, it seemed justified and plausible. God protect the wretch who is the victim of that evil-eyed

passion! He who is jealous of circumstances, in the ordinary transactions of life, usually makes a fool of himself, by seeing a thousand facts that exist in his own brain only; but he whose jealously is goaded on by love must be something more than human, not to let the devils get a firm grasp of his soul. I can give no better illustration of the weakness that this last passion induces, however, than the admission I have just made, that I believed it possible Ursula Malbone could love Zephaniah Thousandacres, or whatever might be his real name. I have since pulled at my own hair, in rage at my own folly, as that moment of weakness has recurred to my mind.

"She writes a desp'rate letter!" exclaimed the young squatter, stretching his large frame, like one who had lost command of his movements through excitement. "I don't believe, major, the like of that gal is to be found in York, taken as State or colony! I've a dreadful likin' for her!"

It was impossible not to smile at this outpouring of attachment; nor, on the whole, would I have been surprised at the ambition it inferred, had the youth been but a very little higher in the social scale. Out of the large towns, and with here and there an exception in favor of an isolated family, there is not, even to this day, much distinction in classes among our Eastern brethren. The great equality of condition and education that prevails, as a rule, throughout all the rural population of New England, while it has done so much for the great body of their people, has had its inevitable consequences in lowering the standard of cultivation among the few, both as it is applied to acquirements, and to the peculiar notions of castes; and nothing is more common in that part of the world, than to hear of marriages that elsewhere would have been thought incongruous, for the simple reason of the difference in ordinary habits and sentiments between the parties. Thus it was, that Zephaniah, without doing as much violence to his own, as would be done to our notions of the fitness of things, might aspire to the hand of Ursula Malbone; unattended, as she certainly was, by any of the outward and more vulgar signs of her real character. I could not but feel some respect for the

young man's taste, therefore, and this so much the more readily, because I no longer was haunted by the very silly phantom of his possible success.

"Having this regard for Dus," I said, "I hope I may count on your following her directions."

"What way can I serve you, major? I do vow, I've every wish to do as Ursula asks of me, if I only knowed how."

"You can undo the fastenings of our prison here, and let us go at once into the woods, where we shall be safe enough against a recapture, depend on it. Do us that favor, and I will give you fifty acres of land, on which you can settle down and become an honest man. Remember, it will be something honorable to own fifty acres of good land, in fee."

Zephaniah pondered on my tempting offer, and I could see that he wavered in opinion, but the decision was adverse to my wishes. He shook his head, looked round wistfully at the woods where he supposed Dus then to be, possibly watching his very movements, but he would not yield.

"If a father can't trust his own son, who can he trust, in natur'?" demanded the young squatter.

"No one should be aided in doing wrong, and your father has no just right to shut up us three, in this building, as he has done. The deed is against the law, and to the law, sooner or later, will he be made to give an account of it."

"Oh! as for the law, he cares little for that. We've been agin law all our lives, and the law is agin us. When a body comes to take the chance of jurors, and witnesses, and lawyers, and poor attorney-gin'rals, and careless prosecutors, law's no great matter to stand out agin in this country. I s'pose there is countries in which law counts for suthin'; but hereabouts, and all through Varmount, we don't kear much for the law, unless it's a matter between man and man, and t' other side holds out for his rights, bull-dog fashion. Then, I allow, it's suthin' to have the law on your side; but it's no great matter in a trespass case."

"This may not end in a trespass case, however. Your father—by the way, is Thousandacres much hurt?"

"Not much to speak on," coolly answered the son, still gazing in the direction of the woods. "A little stunned, but he 's gettin' over it fast, and he 's used to sich rubs. Father 's desp'rate solid about the head, and can stand as much sledgehammering there, as any man I ever seed. Tobit 's tough, too, in that part; and he 's need of it, for he 's forever getting licks around the forehead and eyes."

"And as your father comes to, what seems to be his disposition toward us?"

"Nothin' to speak on, in the way of friendship, I can tell you! The old man 's considerable riled; and when that 's the case, he 'll have his own way for all the governors and judges in the land!"

"Do you suppose he meditates any serious harm to his prisoners?"

"A man does n't meditate a great deal, I guess, with such a rap on the skull. He feels a plaguy sight more than he thinks; and when the feelin's is up, it does n't matter much who 's right and who 's wrong. The great difficulty in your matter is how to settle about the lumber that 's in the creek. The water 's low; and the most that can be done with it, afore November, will be to float it down to the next rift, over which it can never go, with any safety, without more water. It 's risky to keep one like you, and to keep Chainbearer, too, three or four months, in jail like; and it won't do to let you go, neither, sin' you 'd soon have the law a'ter us. If we keep you, too, there 'll be a s'arch made, and a reward offered. Now a good many of your tenants know of this clearin', and human natur' can't hold out agin a reward. The old man knows that well; and it 's what he 's most afeared on. We can stand up agin almost anything better than agin a good, smart reward."

I was amused as well as edified with Zephaniah's simplicity and frankness, and would willingly have pursued the discourse, had not Lowiny come tripping toward us, summoning her brother away to attend a meeting of the

family; the old squatter having so far recovered as to call a council of his sons. The brother left me on the instant, but the girl lingered at my corner of the store-house, like one reluctant to depart.

"I hope the hasty-puddin' was sweet and good," said Lowiny, casting a timid glance in at the chink.

"It was excellent, my good girl, and I thank you for it with all my heart. Are you very busy now?—can you remain a moment while I make a request?"

"Oh! there's nothin' for me to do just now in the house, seein' that father has called the b'ys around him. Whenever he does that, even mother is apt to quit."

"I am glad of it, as I think you are so kind-hearted and good, that I may trust you in a matter of some importance; may I not, my good Lowiny?"

"Squatters' da'ghters may be good, then, a'ter all, in the eyes of grand landholders!"

"Certainly—excellent even; and I am much disposed to believe that you are one of that class." Lowiny looked delighted; and I felt less reluctance at administering this flattery than might otherwise have been the case, from the circumstance that so much of what I said was really merited.

"Indeed, I know you are, and quite unfitted for this sort of life. But I must tell you my wishes at once, for our time may be very short."

"Do," said the girl, looking up anxiously, a slight blush suffusing her face; the truth-telling sign of ingenuous feelings, and the gage of virtue; "do, for I'm dying to hear it; as I know beforehand I shall do just what you ask me to do. I don't know how it is, but when father or mother ask me to do a thing, I sometimes feel as if I could n't; but I don't feel so now, at all."

"My requests do not come often enough to tire you. Promise me, in the first place, to keep my secret."

"That I will!" answered Lowiny, promptly, and with emphasis. "Not a mortal soul shall know anything on't, and I won't so much as talk of it in my sleep, as I sometimes do, if I can any way help it."

"Chainbearer has a niece, who is very dear to him, and who returns all his affection. Her name is—"

"Dus Malbone," interrupted the girl, with a faint laugh. "Zeph has told me all about her, for Zeph and I be great fri'nds—he tells me everything, and I tell him everything. It 's sich a comfort, you can't think, to have somebody to tell secrets to; well, what of Dus?"

"She is here."

"Here! I don't see anything on her," looking round hurriedly, and, as I fancied, in a little alarm; "Zeph says she 's dreadful han'some!"

"She is thought so, I believe; though, in that respect, she is far from being alone. There is no want of pretty girls in America. By saying she is here, I did not mean here, in the store-house, but here, in the woods. She accompanied her uncle as far as the edge of the clearing—look round, more toward the east. Do you see the black stub, in the cornfield, behind your father's dwelling?"

"Sartain—that 's plain enough to be seen; I wish I could see Albany as plain."

"Now, look a little to the left of that stub, and you will see a large chestnut, in the edge of the woods behind it, the chestnut, I mean, that thrusts its top out of the forest into the clearing, as it might be."

"Well, I see the chestnut too, and I know it well. There 's a spring of water cluss to its roots."

"At the foot of that chestnut Chainbearer left his niece, and doubtless she is somewhere near it now. Could you venture to stroll as far, without going directly to the spot, and deliver a message, or a letter?"

"To be sure I could! Why, we gals stroll about the lots as much as we please, and it 's berryin' time now. I 'll run and get a basket, and you can write your letter while I 'm gone. La! Nobody will think anything of my goin' a-berryin'—I have a desp'rate wish to see this Dus! Do you think she 'll have Zeph?"

"Young women's minds are so uncertain, that I should not like to venture an opinion. If it were one of my own

sex, now, and had declared his wishes, I think I could tell you with some accuracy."

The girl laughed; then she seemed a little bewildered, and again she colored. How the acquired—nay, native feeling of the sex, will rise up in tell-tale ingenuousness to betray a woman!

"Well," she cried, as she ran away in quest of the basket, "to my notion a gal's mind is as true and as much to be depended on as that of any mortal crittur living!"

It was now my business to write a note to Dus. The materials for writing, my pocket-book furnished. I tore out a leaf, and approached Chainbearer, telling him what I was about to do, and desiring to know if he had any particular message to send.

"Gif t'e tear gal my plessin', Mortaunt. Tell her olt Chainpearer prays Got to pless her—t'at ist all. I leaf you to say t'e rest."

I did say the rest. In the first place I sent the blessing of the uncle to the niece. Then I explained, in as few words as possible, our situation, giving it as promising an aspect as my conscience would permit. These explanations made, I entreated Ursula to return to her brother, and not again expose herself so far from his protection. Of the close of this note, I shall not say much. It was brief, but it let Dus understand that my feelings toward her were as lively as ever; and I believe it was expressed with the power that passion lends. My note was ended just as Lowiny appeared to receive it. She brought us a pitcher of milk, as a sort of excuse for returning to the store-house, received the note in exchange, and hurried away toward the fields. As she passed out of the cabins, I heard her calling out to a sister that she was going for blackberries to give the prisoners.

I watched the movements of that active girl with intense interest. Chainbearer, who had slept little since my disappearance, was making up for lost time; and as for the Indian, eating and sleeping are very customary occupations of his race, when not engaged in some hunt, or on the war-path, or as a runner.

Lowiny proceeded toward a lot of which the bushes had

taken full possession. Here she soon disappeared, picking berries as she proceeded, with nimble fingers, as if she felt the necessity of having some of the fruit to show on her return. I kept my eye fastened on the openings of the forest, near the chestnut, as soon as the girl was concealed in the bushes, anxiously waiting for the moment when I might see her form reappearing at that spot. My attention was rewarded by getting a glimpse of Dus. It was but a glimpse, the fluttering of a female dress gliding among the trees; but, as it was too soon for the arrival of Lowiny, I knew it must be Dus. This was cheering, as it left little reason to doubt that my messenger would find the object of her visit. In the course of half an hour after Lowiny entered the bushes I saw her, distinctly, near the foot of the chestnut. Pausing a moment, as if to reconnoitre, the girl suddenly moved into the forest, when I made no doubt she and Dus had a meeting. An entire hour passed, and I saw no more of Lowiny.

In the meanwhile Zephaniah made his appearance again at the side of the store-house. This time he came accompanied by two of his brethren, holding the key in his hand. At first I supposed the intention was to arraign me before the high court of Thousandacres, but in this I was in error. No sooner did the young men reach the door of our prison than Zephaniah called out to the Onondago to approach it, as he had something to say to him.

"It must be dull work to a redskin to be shut up like a hog afore it 's wrung," said the youth, drawing his images from familiar objects; "and I s'pose you 'd be right glad to come out here and walk about, something like a free and rational crittur. What do you say, Injin—is sich your desire?"

"Sartain," quietly answered Sureflint. "Great deal radder be out dan be in here."

"So I nat'rally s'posed. Well, the old man says you can come out on promises, if you 're disposed to make 'em. So you 're master of your own movements, you see."

"What he want me do? What he want me say, eh?"

"No great matter, a'ter all, if a body has only a mind

to try to do it. In the first place, you 're to give your parole not to go off, but to stay about the clearin', and to come in and give yourself up when the conch blows three short blasts. Will you agree to that, Sus?"

"Sartain—no go 'way; come back when he call—dat mean stay where he can hear conch."

"Well, that 's agreed on, and it 's a bargain. Next, you 're to agree not to go pryin' round the mill and barn, to see what you can find, but keep away from all the buildin's but the store-us and the dwellings, and not to quit the clearin'. Do you agree?"

"Good; no hard to do dat."

"Well, you 're to bring no weapons into the settlement, and to pass nothing but words and food in to the other prisoners. Will you stand to that?"

"Sartain; willin' 'nough to do dat, too."

"Then you 're in no manner or way to make war on any on us till your parole is up, and you 're your own man ag'in. What do you say to that, Trackless?"

"All good; 'gree to do him all."

"Wa-a-l, that 's pretty much all the old man stands out for; but mother has a condition or two that she insists on 't I shall ask. Should the worst come to the worst, and the folks of this settlement get to blows with the folks out of it, you 're to bargain to take no scalps of women or children, and none from any man that you don't overcome in open battle. The old woman will grant you the scalps of men killed in battle, but thinks it agin reason to take 'em from sich as be not so overcome."

"Good; don't want to take scalp at all," answered the Indian, with an emotion he could not altogether suppress. "Got no tribe—got no young men; what good scalp do? Nobody care how many scalp Susquesus take away—how many he leave behind. All dat forgot long time."

"Wa-a-l, that 's your affair, not mine. But, as all the articles is agreed to, you can come out, and go about your business. Mind, three short, sharp blasts on the conch is the signal to come in and give yourself up."

On this singular cartel Susquesus was set at liberty. I

heard the whole arrangement with astonishment; though, by the manner of the high contracting parties, it was easy to see there was nothing novel in the arrangement, so far as they were concerned. I had heard that the faith of an Indian of any character, in all such cases, was considered sacred, and could not but ask myself, as Susquesus walked quietly out of prison, how many potentates and powers there were in Christendom who, under circumstances similarly involving their most important interests, could be found to place a similar confidence in their fellows! Curious to know how my present masters felt on this subject, the opportunity was improved to question them.

"You give the Indian his liberty on parole," I said to Zephaniah; "will you refuse the same privilege to us white men?"

"An Injin is an Injin. He has his natur', and we 've our 'n. Suthin' was said about lettin' you out, too, major; but the old man would n't hear to it. 'He knowed mankind,' he said, 'and he knowed 't would never do.' If you let a white man loose, he sets his wits at work to find a hole to creep out on the bargain—goin' back to the creation of the 'arth but he 'll find one. The major will say 'I was put in agin law, and now I 'm out, I 'll stay out agin promises,' or some sich reasonin', and now we have him safe, 't will be best to keep him safe! That 's the substance of the old man's idees, and you can see, major, just as well as any on us, how likely he 'll be to change 'em."

There was no contending with this logic, which in secret I well knew to be founded in fact, and I made no further application for my own release. It appeared, however, that Thousandacres himself was half disposed to make a concession in favor of Chainbearer, similar to that he had granted to the Indian. This struck me as singular, after the rude collision that had already occurred between the two men—but there are points of honor that are peculiar to each condition of life, and which the men of each feel a pride not only in causing to be respected, but in respecting themselves.

"Father had some thoughts of taking your parole, too,

Chainbearer," added Zephaniah, "and he concluded he would, had n't it been that you 'd been living out in the settlements so much of late years, that he 's not quite easy in trusting you. A man that passes so much of his time in running boundaries may think himself privileged to step over them."

"Your fat'er is welcome to his opinion," answered Andries coolly. "He 'll get no parole of me, nor do I want any favors of him. We are at swords' p'ints, young man, and let him look out for himself and his lumper as pest he can."

"Nay," answered Zephaniah, stretching himself, and answering with spirit, though he well knew he was speaking to the uncle of Dus, and thereby endangering his interests with his mistress, "nay, Chainbearer, if it comes to that, 't will be 'hardest fend off.' We are a strong party of stout men, and are n't to be frightened by the crier of a court, or to be druv' off the land by sheep-skin. Catamounts must come agin us in droves, afore we 'll give an inch."

"Go away, go away, foolish young fellow; you 're your fat'er's son, and t'at 's as much as neet pe said of you. I want no favors from squatters, which ist a preed I tetest and tespise."

I was a little surprised at hearing this answer, and at witnessing this manifestation of feeling in Chainbearer, who, ordinarily, was a cool, and uniformly a courteous man. On reflection, however, I saw he was not so wrong. An exchange of anything like civilities between us and our captors might seem to give them some claim on us; whereas, by standing on the naked right, we had every advantage of them, in a moral sense at least. Zephaniah and his brethren left us, on receiving this repulse of Andries; but Susquesus kept loitering around the store-house, apparently little better off now he was on its outside than he had been when in it. He had nothing to do, and his idleness was that of an Indian —one of a race of such terrible energies, when energy is required, and so frequently listless, when not pressed upon by necessity, pleasure, war, or interest.

Things were in this state, when, some time after the interview just related, we had another visit from a party headed

by Tobit. This man came to escort Chainbearer and myself to the cabin of Thousandacres, where all the men of the family were assembled; and where, as it now appeared, we were to have something like a hearing, that might seriously affect our fates, for good or for evil. I consulted Chainbearer on the propriety of our lending ourselves to such a measure; but I found Andries disposed to meet the brood of squatters, face to face, and to tell them his mind, let it be when and where it might. Finding my friend in this temper, I made no further objections myself, but left the storehouse in his company, well guarded by four of the young men, all of whom were armed, holding our way to the seat of justice in that wild and patriarchal government.

CHAPTER XXII.

"When Adam delved, and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?"

Old Saw.

THOUSANDACRES had not altogether neglected forms, though so much set against the spirit of the law. We found a sort of court collected before the door of his dwelling, with himself in the centre, while the principal room contained no one but Prudence and one or two of her daughters. Among the latter was Lowiny, to my surprise; for I had not seen the girl return from the woods, though my eyes had not been long turned from the direction in which I had hopes of catching a glimpse of Dus.

Tobit led us prisoners into the house, placing us near the door and facing his father; an arrangement that superseded the necessity of much watchfulness, as our only means of escape would necessarily be by rushing through the throng without—a thing virtually impracticable. But Chainbearer appeared to have no thought of flight. He entered that circle of athletic young men with perfect indifference; and I remember that it struck me his air resembled that which I had often see him assume when our regiment was on the eve of serious service. At such moments old Andries could, and often did, appear grand—dignity, authority, and coldness being blended with sterling courage.

When in the room, Chainbearer and I seated ourselves near the door, while Thousandacres had a chair on the turf without, surrounded by his sons, all of whom were standing.

As this arrangement was made amid a grave silence, the effect was not altogether without impressiveness, and partook of some of the ordinary aspects of justice. I was struck with the anxious curiosity betrayed in the countenance of the females in particular; for the decision to which Thousandcares was about to come would with them have the authority of a judgment of Solomon. Accustomed to reason altogether in their own interests, I made no doubt that, in the main, all of that semi-barbarous breed fancied themselves invested, in their lawless occupation, by some sort of secret natural right; ignorant of the fact that, the moment they reduced their claim to this standard, they put it on the level with that of all the rest of mankind. Nature gives nothing exclusively to an individual, beyond his individuality, and that which appertains to his person and personal qualities; all beyond, he is compelled to share, under the law of nature, with the rest of his race. A title dependent on original possession forms no exception to this rule: for it is merely human convention that gives it force and authority, without which it would form no title at all. But into mysteries like these, none of the family of Thousandacres ever entered; though the still, small voice of conscience, the glimmering of right, were to be traced occasionally, even amid the confused jumble of social maxims in which their selfishness had taken refuge.

We live in an age of what is called progress, and fancy that man is steadily advancing on the great path of his destiny, to something that we are apt to imagine is to form perfection. Certainly I shall not presume to say what is, or what is not, the divine intention as to the future destination of our species on earth; but years and experience must have taught me, or I should have lived in vain, how little there is among our boasted improvements that is really new; and if we do possess anything in the way of principles that bear on them the impress of inviolability, they are those that have become the most venerable, by having stood the severest test of time.

I know not whether the long, silent pause that succeeded our arrival was the result of an intention to

heighten the effect of that strange scene, or whether Thousandacres really wished time to collect his thoughts, and to mature his plans. One thing struck me; notwithstanding the violence that had so recently occurred between Chainbearer and himself, there were no traces of resentment in the hardened and wrinkled countenance of that old tenant of the forest; for he was too much accustomed to those sudden outbreakings of anger, to suffer them long to linger in his recollection. In all that was said, and in all that passed, in the course of that (to me) memorable day, I could trace no manifestation of any feeling in the squatter, in consequence of the rude personal rencontre that he had so lately had with my friend. They had clenched and he had been overthrown; and that ended the matter.

The silence which occurred after we took our seats must have lasted several minutes. For myself, I saw I was only a secondary person in this interview; old Andries having completely supplanted me in importance, not only in acts, but in the estimation of the squatters. To him they were accustomed, and accustomed, moreover, to regard as a sort of hostile power; his very pursuit being opposed to the great moving principle of their every-day lives. The man who measured land, and he who took it to himself without measurement, were exactly antagonist forces, in morals as well as in physics; and might be supposed not to regard each other with the most friendly eyes. Thus it was that the Chainbearer actually became an object of greater interest to these squatters, than the son of one of the owners of the soil, and the attorney in fact of both. As for the old man himself, I could see that he looked very Dutch; which implied a stubborn resolution bordering on obstinacy, unmoved adherence to what he conceived to be right, and a strong dislike to his present neighbors, in addition to other reasons, on account of their having come from the eastward; a race that he both distrusted and respected, disliked yet covertly honored, for many a quality that was both useful and good.

To the next generation, the feeling that was once so

active between the descendants of Holland among ourselves, and the people of English birth who came from the Eastern States, will be almost purely a matter of history. I perceive that my father, in the manuscript he has transmitted to me, as well as I myself, has made various allusions to the subject. It is my wish to be understood in this matter. I have introduced it solely as a fact that is beyond controversy; but, I trust, without any undue bigotry of opinion. It is possible that both Mr. Cornelius Littlepage and his son, unconsciously to ourselves, may have been influenced by the ancient prejudices of the colonies; though I have endeavored scrupulously to avoid them. At any rate, if either of us has appeared to be a little too severe, I trust the reader will remember how much has been uttered to the world in reference to this dislike, by the Yankee, and how little by the Dutchman, during the last century and a half, and grant to one who is proud of the little blood from Holland that he happens to possess, the privilege of showing at least one of the phases of his own side of the story. But it is time to return to our scene in the hut.

"Chainbearer," commenced Thousandacres, after the pause already mentioned had lasted several minutes, and speaking with a dignity that could only have proceeded from the intensity of his feelings; "Chainbearer, you 've been an inimy to me and mine sin' the day we first met. You're an inimy by your cruel callin'; yet you 've the boldness to thrust yourself into my very hands!"

"I'm an enemy to all knaves, T'ousantacres, ant I ton't care who knows it," answered old Andries, sternly; "t'at ist my trate, ast well ast carryin' chain; ant I wish it to pe known far and near. Ast for pein' your enemy by callin', I may say as much for yourself; since there coult pe no surveyin', or carryin' of chain, tit all t'e people help t'emselves to lant, as you haf tone your whole life, wit'out as much as sayin' to t'e owners 'Py your leaf.'"

"Things have now got to a head atween us, Chainbearer," returned the squatter; "but seein' that you're in my hands, I'm ready and willin' to reason the p'int with you, in hopes that we may yet part fri'nds, and that this may be the last

of all our troubles. You and I be gettin' to be oldish men, Chainbearer; and it 's fittin' that them that be gettin' near their eends should sometimes think on 'em. I come from no Dutch colony, but from a part of the world where mankind fears God, and has some thoughts of a futur' state."

"T'at 's neit'er here nor t'ere, T'ousantacres," cried Andries, impatiently. "Not put what religion is a goot t'ing, ant a t'ing to be venerated, ant honoret, and worshippet; put t'at it 's out of place in a squatter country, and most of all in a squatter's mout'. Can you telt me one t'ing, T'ousantacres, and t'at ist, why you Yankees pray so much, ant call on Got to pless you every ot'er wort, and turn up your eyes, and look so temure of Suntays, ant ten go ant squat yourselfs town on Tuchman's lant on a Montay? I 'm an olt man and haf lifed long ant seen much, and hope I unterstant some of t'at which I haf seen and lifed amongst, put I do not comprehent t'at! Yankee religion ant Tutch religion cannot come out of t'e same piple."

"I should think not, I should think not, Chainbearer; and I hope not, in the bargain. I do not wish to be justified by ways like your'n, or a religion like your'n. That which is foreordained will come to pass, let what will happen, and that 's my trust. But, leaving religion out of this matter atween us altogether—"

"Ay, you 'll do well to do t'at," growled Chainbearer, "for religion hast inteet very little to do wit' it."

"I say," answered Thousandacres, on a higher key, as if resolute to make himself heard, "leaving religion for Sabba' days and proper occasions, I 'm ready to talk this matter over on the footin' of reason, and not only to tell you my say, but to hear your'n as is right atween man and man."

"I confess a strong desire to listen to what Thousandacres has to say in defence of his conduct, Chainbearer," I now thought it best to put in; "and I hope you will so far oblige me as to be a patient listener. I am very willing that you should answer, for I know of no person to whom I would sooner trust a religious cause than yourself. Proceed, Thousandacres, my old friend will comply."

Andries did conform to my wishes, thus distinctly expressed, but it was not without sundry signs of disquiet, as expressed in his honest countenance, and a good deal of subdued muttering about "Yankee cunnin' and holy gotliness, t'at is dresset up in wolf's clot'in' "; Chainbearer meaning to express the native garment of the sheep by the latter expression, but falling into a confusion of images that is by no means rare among the men of his caste and people. After a pause the squatter proceeded.

"In talkin' this matter over, young man, I purpose to begin at the beginnin' of things," he said; "for I allow, if you grant any value to titles, and king's grants, and sich sort of things, that my rights here be no great matter. But, beginnin' at the beginnin', the case is very different. You 'll admit, I s'pose, that the Lord created the heavens and the 'arth, and that he created man to be master over the last."

"What of t'at?" eagerly cried Chainbearer. "What of t'at, olt T'ousantacres? So t'e Lort createt yonter eagle t'at is flyin' so far apove your heat, put it's no sign you are to kill him, or he ist to kill you."

"Hear to reason, Chainbearer, and let me have my say; a'ter which I 'm willing to hear you. I begin at the beginnin', when man was first put in possession of the 'arth, to till, and to dig, and to cut saw-logs, and to make lumber, jist as it suited his wants and inclinations. Now, Adam was the father of all, and to him and his posterity was the possession of the 'arth given by Him whose title 's worth that of all the kings and governors and assemblies in the known world. Adam lived his time, and left all things to his posterity, and so has it been from father to son, down to our own day and giniration, accordin' to the law of God, though not accordin' to the laws of man."

"Well, admittin' all you say, squatter, how does t'at make your right here petter t'an t'at of any ot'er man?" demanded Andries, disdainfully.

"Why, reason tells us where a man's rights begin, you 'll see, Chainbearer. Here is the 'arth, as I told you, given to man, to be used for his wants. When you and I are born, some parts of the world is in use, and some parts

is n't. We want land, when we are old enough to turn our hands to labor, and I make my pitch out here in the woods, say where no man has pitched afore me. Now, in my judgment that makes the best of titles, the Lord's title."[1]

"Well, t'en, you 've got your title from t'e Lort," answered Chainbearer, "and you 've got your lant. I s'pose you 'll not take all t'e 'art' t'at is not yet peoplet, and I shoult like to know how you wilt run your lines petween you and your next neighpor. Atmittin' you 're here in t'e woots, how much of t'e lant woult you take for your own religious uses, and how much woult you leaf for t'e next comer?"

"Each man would take as much as was necessary for his wants, Chainbearer, and hold as much as he possessed."

"Put what ist wants, ant what ist possession? Look arount you, T'ousantacres, and tell me how much of t'is fery spot you 'd have a mint to claim unter your Lort's title?"

"How much? As much as I have need on—enough to feed me and mine—and enough for lumber, and to keep the b'ys busy. It would somewhat depend on sarcumstances; I might want more at one time than at another, as b'ys grew up, and the family increased in numbers."

"Enough for lumper how long? Ant to keep t'e poys pusy how long? For a tay, or a week, or a life, or a great numper of lifes? You must tell me t'at, T'ousantacres, pefore I gif cretit to your title."

[1] Lest the reader should suppose Mr. Mordaunt Littlepage is here recording uselessly the silly sayings of a selfish, ignorant, and vulgar robber, it may be well to add, that doctrines of a calibre, considered in respect of morals and logic, similar to this, though varying according to circumstances and the points it is desired to establish, are constantly published in journals devoted to anti-rentism in the State of New York, and men have acted on these principles even to the shedding of blood. We purpose, when we come to our third manuscript, which relates to movements of our immediate time, to distinctly lay before the reader some of these strange doctrines; entertaining little doubt that those who originally promulgated them will scarcely admire their own theories, when they see them introduced into a work that will contain the old-fashioned notions of honesty and right.—EDITOR.

"Don't be onreasonable—don't be onreasonable in your questions, Chainbearer; and I'll answer every one on 'em, and in a way to satisfy you, or any judgmatical man. How long do I want the lumber? As long as I've use for it. How long do I want to keep the b'ys busy? Till they're tired of the place, and want to change works. When a man's aweary of his pitch, let him give it up for another, selling his betterments, of course, to the best chap he can light on."

"Oh! you't sell your petterments, woult you! What! sell t'e Lort's title, olt T'ousantacres? Part wit' Heaven's gift for t'e value of poor miseraple silver and golt?"

"You don't comprehend Aaron," put in Prudence, who saw that Chainbearer was likely to get the best of the argument, and who was always ready to come to the rescue of any of her tribe, whether it might be necessary with words, or tooth and nail, or the rifle. "You don't, by no manner of means, comprehend Aaron, Chainbearer. His idee is, that the Lord has made the 'arth for his critturs; that any one that wants land has a right to take as much as he wants, and to use it as long as he likes; and when he has done, to part with his betterments for sich price as may be agreed on."

"I stick to that," joined in the squatter, with a loud hem, like a man who was sensible of relief; "that's my idee. and I'm determined to live and die by it."

"You've lifed py it, I know very well, T'ousantacres; ant, now you're olt, it's quite likely you'll tie py it. As for comprehentin', you don't comprehent yourself. I'll just ask you, in the first place, how much lant do you holt on t'is very spot? You're here squattet so completely ant finally as to haf puilt a mill. Now tell me how much lant you holt, t'at when I come to squat alongsite of you, our fences may not lap on one anot'er. I ask a simple question, and I hope for a plain ant straight answer. Show me t'e pountaries of your tomain, ant how much of t'e worlt you claim, and how much you ton't claim."

"I've pretty much answered that question already, Chainbearer. My creed is, that a man has a right to hold all he wants, and to want all he holds."

"Got help t'e men, t'en, t'at haf to carry chain petween you and your neighpors, T'ousantacres; a man's wants to-tay, may tiffer from his wants to-morrow, and to-morrow from t'e next tay, ant so on to t'e ent of time! On your toctrine, not'in' woult pe settlet, ant all woult be at sixes and sevens."

"I don't think I'm fully understood, a'ter all that 's been said," returned the squatter. "Here 's two men start in life at the same time, and both want farms. Wa-a-l; there 's the wilderness, or maybe it is n't all wilderness, though it once was. One chooses to buy out betterments, and he does so; t'other plunges in, out o' sight of humanity, and makes his pitch. Both them men 's in the right, and can hold on to their possessions, I say, to the eend of time. That is, on the supposition that right is stronger that might."

"Well, well," answered Chainbearer, a little dryly; "ant s'pose one of your men ton't want to puy petterments, put follows t'ot'er, ant makes his pitch in t'e wilterness also?"

"Let him do 't I say; 't is his right and the law of the Lord."

"Put, s'pose bot' your young men want t'e same pit of wilt lant!"

"First come, first sarved; that 's my maxim. Let the spryest chap have the land. Possession is everything in settling land titles."

"Well, t'en, to please you, T'ousantacres, we 'll let one get aheat of t'ot'er, and haf his possession first; how much shalt he occupy?"

"As much as he wants, I 've told you, already."

"Ay, put when his slower frient comes along, ant hast his wants too, ant wishes to make his pitch alongsite of his olt neighpors, where is t'e pountary petween 'em to be fount?'

"Let 'em agree on 't! They must be dreadful poor neighbors, if they can't agree on so small a matter as that," said Tobit, who was getting weary of the argument.

"Tobit is right," added the father; "let 'em agree on

their line, and run it by the eye. Curse on all chains, and compasses, say I! They're an invention of the devil, to make ill blood in a neighborhood, and to keep strife awake, when our Bibles tell us to live in peace with all mankind."

"Yes, yes, I unterstant all t'at," returned Chainbearer a little disdainfully. "A Yankee piple ist a fery convenient pook. T'ere's aut'ority in it for all sort of toctrines, ant worshippin', ant prayin', ant preachin', ant so forth. It's what I call a so-forth piple, Mortaunt, and wilt reat packwarts as well ast forwarts; put all t'e chapters into one, if necessary, or all t'e verses into chapters. Sometimes St. Luke is St. Paul, ant St. John ist St. Matt'ew. I've he'rt your tominies expount, and no two expount alike. Novelties ist t'e religion of New Englant, ant novelties, in t'e shape of ot'er men's lants, is t'e creet of her lofely chiltren! Oh! yes, I've seen a Yankee piple! Put, this toes n't settle our two squatters; bot' of whom wants a sartain hill for its lumper; now, which is to haf it?"

"The man that got there first, I've told you, old Chainbearer, and once tellin' is as good as a thousand. If the first comer looked on that hill, and said to himself, 'That hill's mine,' 't is his'n."

"Well, t'at ist making property fast! Wast t'at t'e way, T'ousantacres, t'at you took up your estate on t'e Mooseridge property?"

"Sartain—I want no better title. I got here first, and tuck up the land, and shall continue to tuck it up, as I want it. There's no use in being mealy-mouthed, for I like to speak out, though the landlord's son be by!"

"Oh! you speak out lout enouf, and plain enouf, and I shoult n't wonter if you tucket up yourself, one tay, for your pains. Here ist a tifficulty, however, t'at I'll just mention, T'ousantacres, for your consiteration. You take possession of timper-lant, by lookin' at it, you say—"

"Even lookin' at is n't necessary," returned the squatter, eager to widen the grasp of his rights. "It's enough that a man wants the land, and he comes, or sends to secure it. Possession is everything, and I call it possession, to crave a spot, and to make some sort of calkerlation, or works, reason-

ably near it. That gives a right to cut and clear, and when a clearin's begun, it 's betterments, and everybody allows that betterments may be both bought and sold."

"Well, now we unterstant each ot'er. Put here ist t'e small tifficulty I woult mention. One General Littlepage and one Colonel Follock took a fancy to t'is spot long pefore t'e olt French war; ant pesites fancyin' t'e place, ant sentin' messengers to look at it, t'ey pought out t'e Injin right in t'e first place; t'en t'ey pought of t'e king, who hat all t'e lant in t'e country, at t'at time, ast hat n't ot'er owners. T'en t'ey sent surfeyors to run t'e lines, ant t'em very surfeyors passet along py t'is river, ast I know py t'eir fielt-books (field-books): t'en more surfeyors wast sent out to tivite it into great lots, ant now more still haf come to tivite it into small lots: ant t'ey 've paid quit-rents for many years, ant tone ot'er t'ings to prove t'ey want t'is place as much as you want it yourself. T'ey haf hat it more ast a quarter of a century, ant exerciset ownership over it all t'at time; ant wantet it very much t'e whole of t'at quarter of a century, ant if t'e trut' was sait, want it still."

A long pause followed this statement, during which the different members of the family looked at each other, as if in quest of support. The idea of there being any other side to the question than that they had been long accustomed to consider so intently, was novel to them, and they were a little bewildered by the extraordinary circumstance. This is one of the great difficulties under which the inhabitant of a narrow district labors, in all that pertains to his personal notions and tastes, and a good deal in what relates to his principles. This it is that makes the true provincial, with his narrow views, set notions, conceit, and unhesitating likes and dislikes. When one looks around him and sees how very few are qualified, by experience and knowledge of the world, to utter opinions at all, he is apt to be astonished at finding how many there are that do it. I make no doubt that the family of Thousandacres were just as well satisfied with their land ethics, as Paley ever could have been with his moral philosophy, or Newton with his mathematical demonstrations.

"I don't wonter you 're callet T'ousantacres, Aaron Timperman," continued Chainbearer, pushing his advantage, "for wit' such a title to your estate, you might as well pe tarmet Ten T'ousantacres at once, ant more too! Nay, I wonter, while your eyes was trawin' up title teets, t'at you shoult haf been so moterate, for it was just as easy to possess a patent on t'at sort of right, as to possess a single farm."

But Thousandacres had made up his mind to pursue the subject no further; and while it was easy to see that fiery passions were burning within him, he seemed now bent on bringing a conference, from which he doubtless expected different results, to a sudden close. It was with difficulty that he suppressed the volcano that was raging within, but he so far succeeded as to command Tobit to shut up his prisoner again.

"Take hiin away, b'ys, take him back to the store-us," said the old squatter, rising and moving a little on one side to permit Andries to pass, as if afraid to trust himself too near; "he was born the sarvent of the rich, and will die their sarvent. Chains be good enough for him, and I wish him no greater harm than to carry chains the rest of his days."

"Oh! you 're a true son of liperty!" called out the Chainbearer, as he quietly returned to his prison; "a true son of liperty, accordin' to your own conceit! You want eferyt'ing in your own way, and eferyt'ing in your own pocket. T'e Lort's law is a law for T'ousantacres, put not a law to care for Cornelius Littlepage or Tirck Follock!"

Although my old friend was escorted to his prison, no attempt was made to remove me. On the contrary, Prudence joined her husband without, followed by all her young fry, and for a moment I fancied myself forgotten and deserted. A movement in one corner of the room, however, drew my attention there, and I saw Lowiny standing on tiptoe, with a finger on her lips, the sign of silence, while she made eager gestures with the other hand, for me to enter a small passage that communicated by means of a ladder with the loft of the hut. My moccasins were now of great advan-

tage to me. Without pausing to reflect on consequences, or to look around, I did as directed, drawing-to the door after me. There was a small window in the sort of passage in which I now found myself alone with the girl, and my first impulse was to force my body through it, for it had neither glass nor sash; but Lowiny caught my arms.

"Lord ha' massy on us!" whispered the girl, "you'd be seen and taken, or shot! For your life don't go out there now. Here 's a hole for a cellar, and there 's the trap—go down there, and wait till you hear news from me."

There was no time for deliberation, and the sight of Chainbearer's escort, as they proceeded toward the store-house, satisfied me that the girl was right. She held up the trap, and I descended into the hole that answered the purposes of a cellar. I heard Lowiny draw a chest over the trap, and then I fancied I could distinguish the creaking of the rounds of the ladder, as she went up into the loft, which was the place where she usually slept.

All this occurred literally in about one minute of time. Another minute may have passed, when I heard the heavy tread of Thousandacres' foot on the floor above me, and the clamor of many voices, all speaking at once. It was evident that I was missed, and a search had already been commenced. For half a minute nothing was very intelligible to me; then I heard the shrill voice of Prudence calling for Lowiny.

"Lowiny—you Lowiny!" she cried; "where has the gal got to?"

"I'm here, mother," answered my friend from her loft; "you told me to come up and look for your new Bible."

I presume this was true; for Prudence had really dispatched the girl on that errand, and it must have sufficed to lull any suspicions of her daughter's being connected with my disappearance, if any such had been awakened. The movement of footsteps was now quick over my head, those of several men being among them; and in the confusion of voices, I heard that of Lowiny, who must have descended the ladder and joined in the search.

"He must n't be allowed to get off, on no account," said

Thousandacres, aloud, "or we 're all ondone. Everything we have will fall into their hands, and mill, logs, and all will be utterly lost. We shan't even have time to get off the gear and the household stuff."

"He 's up-stairs," cried one. "He must be down cellar," said another. Steps went up the ladder, and I heard the chest drawn from the trap; and a stream of light entering the place, notified me that the trap was raised. The place I was in was a hole twenty feet square, roughly walled with stones, and nearly empty, though it did contain a meat-barrel or two, and a few old tubs. In the winter, it would have been filled with vegetables. There was no place to hide in, and an attempt at concealment would have led to a discovery. I withdrew to a corner, in a part of the cellar that was quite dark, but thought myself lost when I saw a pair of legs descending the ladder. Almost at the same moment, three of the men and two of the women came into the hole, a fourth female, whom I afterward ascertained to be Lowiny herself, standing in the trap in such a way as to double the darkness below. The first man who got down began to tumble the tubs about, and to look into the corners; and the lucky thought occurred to me to do the same thing. By keeping as busy as the rest of them, I actually escaped detection in the dark; and Tobit soon rushed to the ladder, calling out, "The window—the window—he 's not here—the window!" In half a minute the cellar was empty again; or no one remained but myself.

At first I had great difficulty in believing in my good luck; but the trap fell, and the profound stillness of the place satisfied me that I had avoided that danger, at least. This escape was so singular and unexpected, that I could hardly believe in its reality; though real it was, to all intents and purposes. The absurd often strikes the imagination in an absurd way; and so it proved with me on this occasion. I sat down on a tub and laughed heartily, when I felt absolutely certain all was right, holding my sides lest the sound of my voice might yet betray me. Lowiny was similarly infected, for I heard peals of girlish laughter from her, as her brothers tumbled about barrels, and tubs, and

bedsteads, in the upper part of the building, in their fruitless and hurried search. This merriment did not pass unrebuked, however; Prudence lending her daughter a box on the side of the head, that, in one sense, reached even my ears; though it probably aided in saving the girl from the suspicion of being in my secret, by the very natural character of her girlish indulgence. Two or three minutes after the trap closed on me for the second time, the sounds of footsteps and voices overhead ceased, and the hut seemed deserted.

My situation now was far from comfortable. Confined in a dark cellar, with no means of escaping but by the trap, and the almost certainty of falling into the hands of my captors, should I attempt such a thing, I now began to regret having entered so readily into Lowiny's scheme. There would be a certain loss of dignity in a recapture, that was not pleasant in itself; and I will own, I began to have some doubts of my eventual safety, should I again come under the control of such spirits as those of Thousandacres and his eldest son. Buried in that cellar, I was in a manner placed immediately beneath those whose aim it was to secure me, rendering escape impossible, and detection nearly unavoidable.

Such were my meditations when light again streamed into the cellar. The trap was raised, and presently I heard my name uttered in a whisper. Advancing to the ladder, I saw Lowiny holding the door, and beckoning for me to ascend. I followed her directions blindly, and was soon at her side. The girl was nearly convulsed between dread of detection and a desire to laugh; my emerging from the cellar recalling to her imagination all the ludicrous circumstances of the late search.

"Warn't it queer that none on 'em knowed you!" she whispered; then commanding silence by a hasty gesture, "don't speak; for they 're s'archin' still, cluss by, and some on 'em may follow me here. I wanted to get you out of the cellar, as some of the young-uns will be rummagin' there soon for pork for supper; and their eyes are as sharp as needles. Don't you think you could crawl into the mill?

It 's stopped now, and won't be goin' ag'in till this stir 's over."

"I should be seen, my good girl, if any of your people are looking for me near at hand."

"I don't know that. Come to the door, and you 'll see there is a way. Everybody's lookin' on the right side of this house; and by creepin' as far as them logs, you 'd be pretty safe. If you reach the mill safely, climb up into the loft."

I took a moment to survey the chances. At the distance of a hundred feet from the house there commenced a large bed of saw-logs, which were lying alongside of each other; and the timber being from two to four feet in diameter, it would be very possible to creep among it, up to the mill itself, into which even several of the logs had been rolled. The great difficulty would be in reaching the logs through a perfectly open space. The house would be a cover, as against most of the family, who were busy examining everything like a cover on its opposite side; no one supposing for a moment I could be near the mill, inasmuch as it stood directly in front of the spot where the crowd was collected at the moment of my sudden disappearance. But the boys and girls were flying around in all directions; rendering it uncertain how long they would remain in a place, or how long their eyes would be turned away from my path.

It was necessary to do something, and I determined to make an effort. Throwing myself on the ground, I crawled, rather slowly than fast, across that terrible space, and got safely among the logs. As there was no outcry, I knew I had not been seen. It was now comparatively easy to reach the mill. Another dangerous experiment, however, was to expose my person by climbing up to the loft. I could not do this without running the risk of being seen; and I felt the necessity of using great caution. I first raised my head high enough to survey the state of things without. Luckily the house was still between me and most of my enemies; though the small fry constantly came into view and vanished. I looked round for a spot to ascend, and took a final survey of the scene. There stood Lowiny in the door

of the hut, her hands clasped, and her whole air expressive of concern. She saw my head, I knew, and I made a gesture of encouragement, which caused her to start. At the next instant my foot was on a brace, and my body was rising to the beams above. I do not think my person was uncovered ten seconds; and no clamor succeeded. I now felt there were really some chances of my finally affecting an escape, and glad enough was I to think so.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Alone, amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they lived
The rural day, and talked the flowing heart,
Or sighed and looked unutterable things."

THOMSON.

THAT was a somewhat breathless moment. The intensity with which I listened for any sound that might announce my discovery was really painful. I almost fancied I heard a shout, but none came. Then I gave myself up, actually believing that footsteps were rushing toward the mill, with a view to seize me. It was imagination; the rushing of the waters below being the only real sound that disturbed the silence of the place. I had time to breathe, and to look about me.

As might be supposed, the mill was very rudely constructed. I have spoken of a loft, but there was nothing that really deserved the term. Some refuse boards were laid about here and there, on the beams, making fragments of rough flooring; and my first care was to draw several of these boards close together, placing them two or three in thickness, so as to make a place where, by lying down, I could not be seen by any one who should happen to enter the mill. There lay what the millers call a bunch of cherry-wood boards at no great distance from the spot where the roof joined the plate of the building, and within this bunch I arranged my hiding-place. No ostensible change was necessary to complete it, else the experiment might have been hazardous among those who were so much accustomed to note circumstances of that nature. The manner in which the lumber was arranged when I reached the spot was so

little different from what it was when I had done with it, as scarcely to attract attention.

No sooner was my hiding-place completed to my mind, than I looked round to see if there were any means of making observations without. The building was not shingled, but the rain was kept out by placing slabs up and down, as is often seen in the ruder rustic frontier architecture of America. With the aid of my knife, I soon had a small hole between two of these slabs, at a place favorable to such an object; and, though it was no larger than the eye itself, it answered every purpose. Eagerly enough did I now commence my survey.

The search was still going on actively. Those experienced bordermen well knew it was not possible for me to cross the open ground and to reach the woods in the short interval of time between my disappearance and their discovery of the fact, and they consequently felt certain that I was secreted somewhere near the building. Every house had been searched, though no one thought of entering the mill, because my movement, as all supposed, was necessarily in an opposite direction. The fences were examined, and everything like a cover on the proper side of the house was looked into with care and activity. It would seem that, just as I took my first look through the hole, my pursuers were at fault. The search had been made, and of course without effect. Nothing likely to conceal me remained to be examined. It was necessary to come to a stand, and to concert measures for a further search.

The family of squatters were too much accustomed to their situation and its hazards, not to be familiar with all the expedients necessary to their circumstances. They placed the younger children on the lookout, at the points most favorable to my retreat, should I be in a situation to attempt going off in that quarter of the clearing; and then the father collected his older sons around him, and the whole cluster of them, seven in number, came slowly walking toward the mill. The excitement of the first pursuit had sensibly abated, and these practised woodsmen were in serious consultation on the measures next to be taken. In this

condition, the whole party entered the mill, taking their seats, or standing, in a circle directly beneath my post, and within six feet of me. As a matter of course, I heard all that was said, though completely hid from view.

"Here we shall be safe from the long ears of little folks," said the father, as he placed his own large frame on the log that was next to be sawed. "This has been a most unaccountable thing, Tobit, and I'd no idee at all them 'ere city-bred gentry was so expert with their legs. I sometimes think he can't be a Littlepage, but that he's one of our hill folks, tossed out and mannered a'ter the towns' folks to take a body in. It seems an onpossibility that the man should get off, out of the midst on us, and we not see or hear anything on him!"

"We may as well give up the lumber and the betterments, at once," growled Tobit, "as let him get clear. Should he reach Ravensnest, the first thing he'd do would be to swear out warrants agin us all, and Newcome is not the man to stand by squatters in trouble. He'd no more dare deny his landlord, than deny his meetin'."

This expression of Tobit's is worthy of notice. In the estimation of a certain class of religionists among us, the "meetin'," as the young squatter called his church, had the highest place; in his estimate of potentates and powers, it is to be feared, often even higher than the dread Being for whose worship that "meetin'" existed.

"I don't think as hard of the 'squire as all that," answered Thousandacres. "He'll never send out a warrant agin us, without sendin' out a messenger to let us hear of it, and that in time to get us all out of the way."

"And who's to get the boards in the creek out of the way afore the water rises? And who's to hide or carry off all them logs? There's more than a ton weight of my blood and bones in them very logs, in the shape of hard labor, and I'll fight like a she-bear for her cubs afore I'll be driven from them without pay."

It is very surprising that one who set this desperate value on the property he deemed his, should have so little regard for that which belonged to other persons. In this respect,

however, Tobit's feeling was no more than submission to the general law of our nature, which reverses the images before our moral vision, precisely as we change our own relations to them.

"It would go hard with me afore I should give up the lumber or the clearin'," returned Thousandacres, with emphasis. "We've fit King George for liberty, and why should n't we fight for our property? Of what use is liberty at all, if it won't bear a man harmless out of a job of this sort? I despise sich liberty, b'ys, and want none on it."

All the young men muttered their approbation of such a sentiment, and it was easy enough to understand that the elevated notion of personal rights entertained by Thousandacres found an answering echo in the bosom of each of his heroic sons. I dare say the same sympathy would have existed between them, had they been a gang of pickpockets collected in council in a room of the Black Horse, St. Catharine's Lane, Wapping, London.

"But what can we do with the young chap, father, should we take him ag'in?" asked Zephaniah; a question, as all will see, of some interest to myself. "He can't be kept a great while without having a stir made a'ter him, and that would break us up, sooner or later. We may have a clear right to the work of our hands; but, on the whull, I rather conclude the country is agin squatters."

"Who cares for the country?" answered Thousandacres fiercely. "If it wants young Littlepage, let it come and s'arch for him, as we 've been doin'. If that chap falls into my hands once more, he never quits 'em alive, unless he gives me a good and sufficient deed to two hundred acres, includin' the mill, and a receipt in full, on his father's behalf, for all back claims. On them two principles my mind is set, and not to be altered."

A long pause succeeded this bold announcement, and I began to be afraid that my suppressed breathing might be overheard in the profound stillness that followed. But Zephaniah spoke in time to relieve me from this apprehension, and in a way to satisfy me that the party below, all

of whom were concealed from my sight, had been pondering on what had been said by their leader, and not listening to detect any tell-tale sounds from me.

"I 've heern say," Zephaniah remarked, "that deeds gi'n in that way won't stand good in law. 'Squire Newcome was talkin' of sich transactions the very last time I was out at the 'Nest."

"I wish a body could find out what would stand good in law!" growled Thousandacres. "They make their laws, and lay great account in havin' 'em obsarved; and then, when a man comes into court with everything done accordin' to their own rules, five or six attorneys start up and bawl out, 'This is agin law!' If a deed is to set forth so and so, and is to have what they call 'hand and seal and date' beside; and sich bein' the law, I want to know why an instrument so made won't hold good by their confounded laws? Law is law, all over the world, I s'pose; and though it 's an accursed thing, if men agree to have it they ought to stand by their own rules. I've thought a good deal of squeezin' writin's out of this young Littlepage; and just as my mind 's made up to do 't if I can lay hands on him ag'in, you come out and tell me sich writin's be good for nothin'. Zeph, Zeph—you go too often out into them settlements, and get your mind pervarted by their wickedness and talk."

"I hope not, father, though I own I do like to go there. I've come to a time of life when a man thinks of marryin'; and there bein' no gal here, unless it be one of my own sisters, it 's nat'ral to look into the next settlement. I 'll own sich has been my object in going to the 'Nest."

"And you 've found the gal you set store by? Out with the whull truth, like a man. You know I 've always been set agin lyin', and have ever endeavored to make the whull of you speak truth. How is it, Zephaniah? have you found a gal to your mind, and who is 't? Our'n is a family into which anybody can come by askin', you 'll remember."

"Lord, father! Dus Malbone would no more think of askin' me to have her, than she 'd think of marryin' you. I've offered three times, and she 's told me, as plain as a

woman could speak, that she could n't nohow consent, and that I had n't ought to think of her any longer."

"Who is the gal, in this part of the country, that holds her head so much higher than one of Thousandacres' sons?" demanded the old squatter, with some such surprise, real or affected, as a Bourbon might be supposed to feel at having his alliance spurned on the score of blood. "I'd like to see her, and to convarse with this young woman. What did you call her name, Zeph?"

"Dus Malbone, father, and the young woman that lives with Chainbearer. She 's his niece, I believe, or something of that sort."

"Ha! Chainbearer's niece, d' ye say? His taken da'ghter. Is n't there some mistake?"

"Dus Malbone calls old Andries 'Uncle Chainbearer,' and I s'pose from that she 's his niece."

"And you 've offered to marry the gal three times, d' ye tell me, Zephaniah?"

"Three times, father; and every time she has given 'no' for her answer."

"The fourth time, maybe, she 'll change her mind. I wonder if we could n't lay hands on this gal, and bring her into our settlement? Does she live with Chainbearer, in his hut out here in the woods?"

"She doos, father."

"And doos she set store by her uncle? or is she one of the flaunty sort that thinks more of herself and gownd, than she does of her own flesh and blood? Can you tell me that, Zeph?"

"In my judgment, father, Dus Malbone loves Chainbearer as much as she would was he her own father."

"Ay, some gals have n't half the riverence and love for their own fathers that they should have. What 's to prevint your goin', Zephaniah, to Chainbearer's pitch, and tell the gal that her uncle 's in distress, and that you don't know what may happen to him, and that she had better come over and see a'ter him? When we get her here, and she understands the natur' of the case, and you put on your Sabba'-day clothes, and we send for 'Squire Newcome, you

may find yourself a married man sooner than you thought for, my son, and settle down in life. A'ter that, there 'll not be much danger of Chainbearer's tellin' on us, or of his great fri'nd here, this Major Littlepage's troublin' the lumber afore the water rises."

A murmur of applause followed this notable proposal, and I fancied I could hear a snigger from the young man, as if he found the project to his mind, and thought it might be feasible.

"Father," said Zephaniah, "I wish you'd call Lowiny here, and talk to her a little about Dus Malbone. There she is, with Tobit's wife and mother, looking round among the cabbages, as if a man could be hid in such a place."

Thousandacres called to his daughter in an authoritative way; and I soon heard the girl's step, as she came, a little hesitatingly as I fancied, into the mill. As it would be very natural to one in Lowiny's situation to suppose that her connection with my escape occasioned this summons, I could not but feel for what I presumed was the poor girl's distress at receiving it.

"Come here, Lowiny," commenced Thousandacres, in the stern manner with which it was his wont to speak to his children; "come nearer, gal. Do you know anything of one Dus Malbone, Chainbearer's niece?"

"Lord ha' massy! Father, how you did frighten me! I thought you might have found the gentleman, and s'posed I'd a hand in helpin' to hide him!"

Singular as it may seem, this burst of conscience awakened no suspicion in any of the listeners. When the girl thus betrayed herself, I very naturally expected that such an examination would follow as would extort the whole details from her. Not at all, however; neither the father nor any of the sons understood the indiscreet remarks of the girl, but imputed them to the excitement that had just existed, and the circumstance that her mind had, naturally enough, been dwelling on its cause. It is probable that the very accidental manner of my evasion, which precluded the attaching of suspicious facts to what had really occurred, favored Lowiny on this occasion; it being impossible that she should be suspected of anything of that character.

"Who 's talkin' or thinkin' now of young Littlepage, at all?" returned Thousandacres a little angrily. "I ask if you know anything of Chainbearer's niece—one Dus Malbone, or Malcome?"

"I do know suthin' of her, father," answered Lowiny, willing enough to betray one—the lesser—of her secrets, in order to conceal the other, which, on all accounts, was much the more important; "though I never laid eyes on her till to-day. Zeph has often talked to me of the gal that carried chain with her uncle for a whull month; and he has a notion to marry her if he can get her."

"Never laid eyes on her till to-day! Whereabouts have you laid eyes on her to-day, gal? Is all creation comin' in upon my clearin' at once? Whereabouts have you seen this gal to-day?"

"She come to the edge of the clearin' with her uncle, and—"

"Well, what next? Why don't you go on, Lowiny?"

I could have told Thousandacres why his daughter hesitated; but the girl got out of the scrape by her own presence of mind and ingenuity, a little aided, perhaps, by some practice in sins of the sort.

"Why, I went a-berryin' this forenoon, and up agin the berry lot, just in the edge of the woods, I saw a young woman, and that was the Malbone gal. So we talked together, and she told me all about it. She 's waitin' for her uncle to come back."

"So, so; this is news indeed, b'ys! Do you know where the gal is now, Lowiny?"

"Not just now, for she told me she should go deeper into the woods, lest she should be seen; but an hour afore sundown she 's to come to the foot of the great chestnut, just agin the berry lot; and I promised to meet her, or to carry her out suthin' for supper, and to make a bed on."

This was said frankly, and with the feeling and sympathy that females are apt to manifest in behalf of each other. It was evident Lowiny's audience believed every word she had said; and the old man, in particular, determined at

once to act. I heard him move from his seat, and his voice sounded like one who was retiring, as he said,—

"'Tobit—b'ys—come with me, and we'll have one more look for the young chap through the lumber and the housen. It may be that he's stolen in there while our eyes have been turned another way. Lowiny, you need n't come with us, for the flutterin' way of you gals don't do no good in sich a s'arch."

I waited until the last heavy footstep was inaudible, and then ventured to move far enough, on my hands, to find a crack that I had purposely left, with a view to take through it an occasional look below. On the log which her father had just left, Lowiny had seated herself. Her eye was roaming over the upper part of the mill, as if in quest of me. At length she said, in a suppressed voice,—

"Be you here still? Father and the b'ys can't hear us now, if you speak low."

"I am here, good Lowiny, thanks to your friendly kindness, and have overheard all that passed. You saw Ursula Malbone, and gave her my note?"

"As true as you are there, I did; and she read it over so often, I guess she must know it by heart."

"But what did she say? Had she no message for her uncle—no answer to what I had written?"

"Oh! she'd enough to say—gals love to talk, you know, when they get with one another, and Dus and I talked together half an hour, or longer. She'd plenty to say, though it won't do for me to sit here and tell it to you lest somebody wonder I stay so long in the mill."

"You can tell me if she sent any message, or answer to my note?"

"She never breathed a syllable about what you'd writ. I warrant you she's close-mouthed enough, when she gets a line from a young man. Do you think her so desp'rate handsome as Zeph says she is?"

This boded ill, but it was a question that it was politic to answer, and to answer with some little discretion. If I lost the services of Lowiny, my main-stay was gone.

"She is well enough to look at, but I've seen quite as

handsome young women lately. But, handsome or not, she is one of your own sex, and is not to be deserted in her trouble."

"Yes, indeed," answered Lowiny, with an expression of countenance that told me at once the better feelings of her sex had all returned again, "and I'll not desart her, though father drive me out of the settlement. I am tired of all this squatting, and think folks ought to live as much in one spot as they can. What's best to be done about Dus Malbone—perhaps she'd like well enough to marry Zeph?"

"Did you see or hear anything while with her, to make you think so? I am anxious to know what she said."

"La! She said sights of things; but most of her talk was about old Chainbearer. She never named your name so much as once!"

"Did she name Zephaniah's? I make no doubt that anxiety on the part of her uncle was her chief care. What are her intentions, and will she remain near that tree until you come?"

"She stays under a rock not a great way from the tree, and there she'll stay till I go to meet her, at the chestnut. We had our talk under that rock, and it's easy enough to find her there."

"How do things look around us? Might I descend, slip down into the bed of the river, and go round to Dus Malbone, so as to give her notice of the danger she is in?"

Lowiny did not answer me for near a minute, and I began to fear that I had put another indiscreet question. The girl seemed thoughtful, but when she raised her face so high as to allow me to see it, all the expression of the more generous feminine sympathy was visible.

"'T would be hard to make Dus have Zeph, if she don't like him, would n't it!" she said with emphasis. "I don't know but 't would be better to let her know what 's coming, so that she can choose for herself."

"She told me," I answered, with perfect truth, "that she is engaged to another, and it would be worse than cruel—it would be wicked, to make her marry one man, while she loves another."

"She shan't do't!" cried the girl, with an animation that I thought dangerous. But she gave me no opportunity for remonstrance, as, all her energies being aroused, she went to work in earnest to put me in the way of doing what I most desired to achieve.

"D' ye see the lower corner of the mill?" she continued, hurriedly. "That post goes down to the rock over which the water falls. You can walk to that corner without any danger of being seen, as the ruff hides you, and when you get there, you can wait till I tell you to get on the post. 'T will be easy to slide down that post to the rock, and there 'll be not much of a chance of being seen, as the post will nearly hide you. When you 're on the rock you 'll find a path that leads along the creek till you come to a footbridge. If you cross that log, and take the left-hand path, 't will bring you out near the edge of the clearin', up on the hill again, and then you 'll have only to follow the edge of the woods a little way, afore you come to the chestnut. The rock is right off, agin the chestnut, only about fifty rods."

I took in these directions eagerly, and was at the post almost as soon as the girl ceased speaking. In order to do this I had only to walk on the boards that lay scattered about on the girts of the mill, the roof completely concealing the movement from any on its outside. I made my arrangements, and only waited for a signal, or the direction from Lowiny, to proceed.

"Not yet," said the girl, looking down and affecting to be occupied with something near her feet. "Father and Tobit are walkin' this way, and lookin' right at the mill. Now—get ready—they 've turned their heads, and seem as if they 'd turn round themselves next. They 've turned away ag'in; wait one moment—now 's a good time—don't go away altogether without my seein' you once more."

I heard these last words, but it was while sliding down the post. Just as my head came so low as to be in a line with the objects scattered about the floor of the mill, I clung to the post to catch one glimpse of what was going on without. Thousandacres and Tobit were about a hun-

dred yards distant, walking apart from the group of young men, and apparently in deep consultation together. It was quite evident no alarm was taken, and down I slid to the rock. At the next moment I was in the path, descending to the foot-bridge, a tree that had been felled across the stream. Until that tree was crossed, and a slight distance of the ascent on the other side of the stream, along the left-hand path, was overcome, I was completely exposed to the observation of any one who might be in a situation to look down into the glen of the river. At almost any other moment at that particular season, my discovery would have been nearly certain, as some of the men and boys were always at work in the water; but the events of that morning called them elsewhere, and I made the critical passage, a distance of two hundred yards or more, in safety. As soon as I entered behind a cover, my speed abated, and having risen again to the level of the dwellings, or even a little above them, I profited by openings among the small pine-bushes that fringed the path, to take a survey of the state of things among the squatters.

There the cluster of heavy, lounging young men was, Thousandacres and Tobit walking apart, as when last seen. Prudence was at the door of a distant cabin, surrounded, as usual, by a collection of the young fry, and conversing, herself, eagerly, with the wives of two or three of her married sons. Lowiny had left the mill, and was strolling along the opposite side of the glen, so near the verge of the rocks as to have enabled her to see the whole of my passage across the open space. Perceiving that she was quite alone, I ventured to hem just loud enough to reach her ear. A hurried, frightened gesture assured me that I had been heard, and, first making a gesture for me to go forward, the girl turned away, and went skipping off toward the cluster of females who surrounded her mother.

As for myself, I now thought only of Dus. What cared I if she did love another? A girl of her education, manners, sentiments, birth, and character, was not to be sacrificed to one like Zephaniah, let what might happen; and could I reach her place of concealment in time, she might

still be saved. These thoughts fairly winged my flight, and I soon came in sight of the chestnut. Three minutes later I laid a hand on the trunk of the tree itself. As I had been a quarter of an hour at least, in making the circuit of that side of the clearing, some material change might have occurred among the squatters, and I determined to advance to the edge of the bushes, in Lowiny's "berry lot," which completely screened the spot, and ascertain the facts, before I sought Dus at her rock.

The result showed that some measures had been decided on between Thousandacres and Tobit. Not one of the males, a lad that stood sentinel at the store-house, and a few of the smaller boys, excepted, was to be seen. I examined all the visible points with care, but no one was visible. Even Susquesus, who had been lounging about the whole day, or since his liberation, had vanished. Prudence and her daughters, too, were in a great commotion, hurrying from cabin to cabin, and manifesting all that restlessness which usually denotes excitement among females. I stopped but a moment to ascertain these leading circumstances, and turned to seek the rock. While retiring from among the bushes, I heard the fallen branch of a tree snap under a heavy footstep, and, looking cautiously around, saw Jaaf, or Jaap as we commonly called him, advancing towards me, carrying a rifle on each shoulder.

"Heaven's blessing on you, my faithful Jaap!" I cried, holding out an arm to receive one of the weapons. "You come at a most happy moment, and can lead me to Miss Malbone."

"Yes, sah, and glad to do it, too. Miss Dus up here, a bit, in 'e wood, and can werry soon see her. She keep me down here to look out, and I carry bot' rifle, Masser Chainbearer's and my own, 'cause Miss Dus no great hand wid gunpowder. But where you come from, Masser Mordaunt?—and why you run away so in night time?"

"Never mind just now, Jaap—in proper time you shall know all about it. Now we must take care of Miss Ursula. Is she uneasy? has she shown any fear on her uncle's account?"

"She cry half 'e time, sah—den she look up bold, and resolute, just like ole massa, sah, when he tell the rijjement 'charge baggonet,' and seem as if she want to go right into T'ousandacres' huts. Lor' bless me, sah, Massa Mordaunt —if she ask me one question about you to-day, she ask me a hundred!"

"About me, Jaap!" But I arrested the impulsive feeling in good time, so as not to be guilty of pumping my own servant concerning what others had said of me; a meanness I could not easily have pardoned in myself. But I increased my speed, and having Jaap for my guide, was soon at the side of Dus. The negro had no sooner pointed out to me the object of my search, than he had the discretion to return to the edge of the clearing, carrying with him both rifles; for I returned to him the one I had taken, in my eagerness to hurry forward, the instant I beheld Dus.

I can never forget the look with which that frank, noble-hearted girl received me! It almost led me to hope that my ears had deceived me, and that, after all, I was an object of the highest interest with her. A few tears, half-suppressed, but suppressed with difficulty, accompanied that look; and I had the happiness of holding for some time, and of pressing to my heart, that little hand that was freely —nay, warmly extended to me.

"Let us quit this spot at once, dearest Ursula," I cried, the moment I could speak. "It is not safe to remain near that family of wretches, who live by depredation and violence."

"And leave uncle Chainbearer in their hands?" answered Dus, reproachfully. "You, surely, would not advise me to do that?"

"If your own safety demands it, yes—a thousand times, yes. We must fly, and there is not a moment to lose. A design exists among those wretches to seize you, and to make use of your fears to secure the aid of your uncle in extricating them from the consequences of this discovery of their robberies. It is not safe, I repeat, for you to remain a minute longer here."

The smile that Dus now bestowed on me was very sweet, though I found it inexplicable; for it had as much of pain and suffering in it, as it had of that which was winning.

"Mordaunt Littlepage, have you forgotten the words spoken by me when we last parted?" she asked seriously.

"Forgotten! I can never forget them! They drove me nearly to despair, and were the cause of bringing us all into this difficulty."

"I told you that my faith was already plighted—that I could not accept your noble, frank, generous, manly offer, because another had my troth."

"You did—you did. Why renew my misery—"

"It is with a different object that I am now more explicit. That man to whom I am pledged is in those huts, and I cannot desert him."

"Can I believe my senses! Do you—can you—is it possible that one like Ursula Malbone can love Zephaniah Thousandacres—a squatter himself, and the son of a squatter?"

The look with which Dus regarded me said at once that her astonishment was quite as great as my own. I could have bitten off my hasty and indiscreet tongue, the instant it had spoken; and I am sure the rush of tell-tale blood in my face must have proclaimed to my companion that I felt most thoroughly ashamed of myself. This feeling was deepened nearly to despair, when I saw the expression of abased mortification that came over the sweet and usually happy countenance of Dus, and the difficulty she had in suppressing her tears.

Neither spoke for a minute, when my companion broke silence by saying steadily, I might almost add solemnly,—

"This, indeed, shows how low my fortune has become! But I pardon you, Mordaunt; for, humble as that fortune is, you have spoken nobly and frankly in my behalf, and I exonerate you from any feeling that is not perfectly natural for the circumstances. Perhaps,"—and a bright blush suffused the countenance of Dus as she said it,—"perhaps I might attribute the great mistake into which you have fallen to a passion that is most apt to accompany strong love,

and in so much prize it, instead of throwing it away with contempt. But between you and me, whatever comes of it, there must be no more mistakes. The man to whom my faith is plighted, and to whom my time and services are devoted, so long as one or both of us live, is uncle Chainbearer, and no other. Had you not rushed from me in the manner you did, I might have told you this, Mordaunt, the evening you were showing so much noble frankness yourself."

"Dus!—Ursula!—beloved Miss Malbone, have I then no preferred rival?"

"No man has ever spoken to me of love, but this uncouth and rude young squatter, and yourself."

"Is your heart then untouched? Are you still mistress of your own affections?"

The look I now received from Dus was a little saucy; but that expression soon changed to one that had more of the deep feeling and generous sympathy of her precious sex in it.

"Were I to answer 'yes,' many women would think I was being no more than true to the rights of a girl who has been so unceremoniously treated; but—"

"But what, charming, most beloved Ursula? But what?"

"I prefer truth to coquetry, and shall not attempt to deny what it would be almost treason against nature to suppose. How could a girl, educated as I have been, without any preference to tie her to another, be shut up in this forest with a man who has treated her with so much kindness and devotion and manly tenderness, and be insensible to his merits? Were we in the world, Mordaunt, I think I should prefer you to all others; being, as we are, in this forest, I know I do."

The reader shall not be let into the sacred confidence that followed; any further, at least, than to know the main result. A quarter of an hour passed so swiftly, and so sweetly, indeed, that I could hardly take it on myself to record one half that was said. Dus made no longer any hesitation in declaring her attachment for me; and though

she urged her own poverty as a just obstacle to my wishes, it was faintly, as most Americans of either sex would do. In this particular, at least, we may fairly boast of a just superiority over all the countries of the Old World. While it is scarcely possible that either man or woman should not see how grave a barrier to wedded happiness is interposed by the opinions and habits of social castes, it is seldom that any one, in his or her own proper sphere, feels that the want of money is an insurmountable obstacle to a union—more especially when one of the parties is provided with the means of maintaining the household gods. The seniors may, and do often have scruples on this score, but the young people rarely. Dus and myself were in the complete enjoyment of this happy simplicity, with my arms around her waist, and her head leaning on my shoulder, when I was aroused from a state that I fancied Elysium, by the hoarse, raven-throated cry of—

"Here she is! Here she is, father! Here they are both!"

On springing forward to face the intruders, I saw Tobit and Zephaniah directly before me, with Lowiny standing at no great distance behind them. The first looked ferocious, the second jealous and angry, the third abashed and mortified. In another minute we were surrounded by Thousandacres and all the males of his brood.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"My love is young—but other loves are young;
And other loves are fair, and so is mine;
An air divine discloses whence he sprung;
He is my love who boasts that air divine."

SHENSTONE.

A MORE rude and violent interruption of a scene in which the more gentle qualities love to show themselves never occurred. I, who knew the whole of the past, saw at once that we had very serious prospects before us; but Dus at first felt only the consciousness and embarrassment of a woman who has betrayed her most sacred secret to vulgar eyes. That very passion, which a month later, and after the exchange of the marriage vows, it would have been her glory to exhibit in face of the whole community, on the occurrence of any event of moment to myself, she now shrunk from revealing; and I do believe that maiden bashfulness gave her more pain, when thus arrested, than any other cause. As for the squatters, she probably had no very clear conceptions of their true characters; and it was one of her liveliest wishes to be able to join her uncle. But Thousandacres soon gave us both cause to comprehend how much he was now in earnest.

"So, my young major, you 're catched in the same nest, be you! You 've your ch'ice to walk peaceably back where you belong, or to be tied and carried there like a buck that has been killed a little out in the woods. You never knowed Thousandacres and his race, if you really thought to slip away from him, and that with twenty miles of woods around you!"

I intimated a wish not to be tied, and professed a perfect willingness to accompany my captors back to their dwellings; for nothing would have tempted me to desert Dus, under the circumstances. The squatters might have declared the road open to me, but the needle does not point more unerringly to the pole than I should have followed my magnet, though at liberty.

Little more was said until we had quitted the woods, and had reached the open fields of the clearing. I was permitted to assist my companion though the bushes, and in climbing a fence or two; the squatters, who were armed to a man, forming a circle around us, at a distance that enabled me to whisper a few words to Dus, in the way of encouragement. She had great natural intrepidity for a woman, and I believe I ought to escape the imputation of vanity, if I add that we both felt so happy at the explanations which had so lately been had, that this new calamity could not entirely depress us, so long as we were not separated.

"Be not downhearted, dearest Dus," I whispered, as we approached the store-house; "after all, these wretches will not dare to transgress against the law, very far."

"I have few fears, with you and uncle Chainbearer so near me, Mordaunt," was her smiling answer. "It cannot be long before we hear from Frank, who is gone, as you must have been told to Ravensnest, for authority and assistance. He left our huts at the same time we left them to come here, and must be on his return long before this."

I squeezed the hand of the dear girl, receiving a gentle pressure in return, and prepared myself to be separated from her, as I took it for granted that Prudence and her daughters would hold watch and ward over the female prisoner. I had hesitated, ever since quitting the woods, about giving her notice of the trial that probably awaited her; but as no attempt to coerce a marriage could be made until the magistrate arrived, I thought it would be rendering her unnecessarily unhappy. The trial, if it did come at all, would come soon enough of itself; and I had no apprehension that one of Dus's spirit and character, and

who had so recently and frankly admitted that her whole heart was mine, could be frightened into a concession that would give Zephaniah any claim to her. To own the truth a mountain had been removed from my own breast, and I was too happy on this particular account, to be rendered very miserable on any other, just at that time. I do believe Dus was a little sustained by some similar sentiment.

Dus and I parted at the door of the first house, she being transferred to the keeping of Tobit's wife, a woman who was well bestowed on her brutal and selfish husband. No violence was used, however, toward the prisoner, who was permitted to go at large; though I observed that one or two of the females attached themselves to her person immediately, no doubt as her keepers.

In consequence of our having approached the dwelling of the squatters by a new path, Chainbearer knew nothing of the arrest of his niece, until the fact was communicated by me. He was not even aware of my being retaken, until he saw me about to enter the prison again; though he probably anticipated that such might be my fate. As for Susquesus, he seldom manifested surprise or emotion of any sort, let what would occur.

"Well, Mortaunt, my lat, I knowet you had vanishet, py hook or py crook, and nopoty knowet how; put I t'ought you woult fint it hart to t'row t'ese rascally squatters off your trail," cried Andries, giving me a hearty shake of the hand as I entered the prison. "Here we are, all t'ree of us, ag'in; ant it's lucky we're such goot frients, as our quarters are none of t'e largest or pest. T'e Injin fount I was alone, so he took pack his parole, and ist a close prisoner like t'e rest of us, put in one sense a free man. You can tig up t'e hatchet agin t'ese squatters whenever you please now; is it not so, Sureflint?"

"Sartin—truce down—Susquesus prisoner like everybody. Give T'ousandacres p'role back ag'in—Injin free man, now."

I understood the Onondago's meaning well enough, though his freedom was of a somewhat questionable charac-

ter. He merely wished to say that, having given himself up to the squatters, he was released from the conditions of his parole, and was at liberty to make his escape, or to wage war on his captors in any manner he saw fit. Luckily Jaap had escaped, for I could see no signs of even his presence being known to Thousandacres or to his sons. It was something to have so practised a woodsman and so true a friend still at large, and near us; and the information he could impart, should he fall in with Frank Malbone, with the constable and the posse, might be of the utmost service to us. All these points Chainbearer and I discussed at large, the Indian sitting by, an attentive but a silent listener. It was our joint opinion that Malbone could not now be very distant with succor. What would be the effect of an attack on the squatters it was not easy to predict, since the last might make battle; and, small as was their force, it would be likely to prove very available in a struggle of that nature. The females of such a family were little less efficient than the males, when posted behind logs; and there were a hundred things in which their habits, experience, and boldness might be made to tell, should matters be pushed to extremities.

"Got knows—Got only knows, Mortaunt, what will come of it all," rejoined Chainbearer to one of my remarks, puffing coolly at his pipe at intervals, in order to secure the fire he had just applied to it. "Nut'in is more unsartain t'an war, as Sus, here, fery well knows py long exper'ence, ant as you ought to know yourself, my poy, hafin seen sarfice, ant warm sarfice, too. Shoult Frank Malbone make a charge on t'is settlement, as pein an olt soltier he will pe fery likely to do, we must make efery effort to fall in on one of his flanks, in orter to cover t'e atvance or t'e retreat, as may happen to pe t'e movement at t'e time."

"I trust it will be the advance, as Malbone does not strike me as a man likely to retreat very easily. But, are we certain 'Squire Newcome will grant the warrant he will ask for, being in such close communion himself with these squatters?"

"I haf t'ought of all t'at, too, Mortaunt, ant t'ere is goot sense in it. I t'ink he will at least sent wort to T'ousant-

acres, to let him know what is comin', ant make as many telays as possible. T'e law is a lazy sarfant when it wishes to pe slow; ant many is t'e rogue t'at hast outrun it, when t'e race has peen to safe a pack or a fine. Nefert'eless, Mortaunt, t'e man who is right fights wit' great otts in his fafor, ant is fery apt to come out pest in t'e long run. It is a great advantage to pe always right; a trut' I've known ant felt from poyhoot, put which hast peen mate more ant more clear to me since t'e peace, ant I haf come pack to lif wit' Dus. T'at gal has teachet me much on all such matters; ant it woult do your heart goot to see her alone wit' an olt ignorant man in t'e woots, of a Sunday, a-tryin' to teach him his piple, ant how he ought to lofe ant fear Got!"

"Does Dus do this for you, my old friend? Does that admirable creature really take on herself the solemn office of duty and love! Much as I admired and esteemed her before, for her reverence and affection for you, Chainbearer, I now admire and esteem her the more, for this proof of her most true and deep-seated interest in your welfare."

"I'll tell you what, poy—Dus is petter ast twenty tominies to call a stupporn olt fellow, t'at has got a conscience toughenet ant hartenet by lifin' t'reescore years ant ten in t'e worlt, pack from his wicketness into t'e ways of gotliness and peace. You're young, Mortaunt, and haf not yet got out of t'e gristle of sin into t'e pone, ant can hartly know how strong ist t'e holt t'at hapit and t'e worlt gets of an olt man; put I hope you may lif long enough to see it all, ant to feel it all." I did not even smile, for the child-like earnestness, and the sincere simplicity with which Andries delivered himself of this wish, concealed its absurdity behind a veil of truth and feeling too respectable to admit of a single disrespectful impulse. "Ant t'at is t'e worst wish I can wish you, my tear poy. You know how it hast peen wit' me, Mortaunt; a chainpearer's callin' is none of t'e pest to teach religion; which toes not seem to flourish in t'e woots; t'ough why I cannot tell; since, as Dus has ag'in ant ag'in shown to me, Got is in t'e trees, ant on t'e mountains, ant along t'e valleys, ant is to pe hearet in t'e prooks

ant t'e rifers, as much if not more t'an He is to pe hearet ant seen in t'e clearin's ant t'e towns. Put my life was not a religious life afore t'e war, ant war is not a pusiness to make a man t'ink of deat' as he ought; t'ough he hast it tay and night, as it might pe, afore his eyes."

"And Dus, the excellent, frank, buoyant, sincere, womanly, and charming Dus, adds these admirable qualities to other merits, does she! I knew she had a profound sentiment on the subject of religion, Chainbearer, though I did not know she took so very lively an interest in the welfare of those she loves, in connection with that all-important interest."

"You may well call t'e gal py all t'em fine worts, Mortaunt, for she desarts efery one of t'em, ant more too. No—no—Dus is n't known in a tay. A poty may lif in t'e same house wit' her, and see her smilin' face, ant hear her merry song, mont's ant mont's, ant not l'arn all t'at t'ere ist of gotliness, ant meekness, ant virtue, ant love, ant piety, in t'e pottom of her soul. One tay you 'll t'ink well of Dus, Mortaunt Littlepage."

"I!—Tell me that I shall think well of Ursula Malbone, the girl that I almost worship! Think well of her whom I now love with an intensity that I did not imagine was possible, three months since! Think well of her who fills all my waking, and not a few of my sleeping thoughts—of whom I dream—to whom I am betrothed—who has heard my vows with favor, and has cheerfully promised, all parties that are interested consenting, to become at some early day my wife!"

Old Andries heard my energetic exclamation with astonishment; and even the Indian turned his head to look on me with a gratified attention. Perceiving that I had gone so far, under an impulse I had found irresistible, I felt the necessity of being still more explicit, and of communicating all I had to say on the subject.

"Yes," I added, grasping old Andries by the hand, "yes, Chainbearer, I shall comply with your often-expressed wishes. Again and again have you recommended your lovely niece to me as a wife, and I come now to take you at

your word, and to say that nothing will make me so happy as to be able to call you uncle."

To my surprise, Chainbearer expressed no delight at this announcement. I remarked that he had said nothing to me on his favorite old subject of my marrying his niece, since my arrival at the 'Nest; and now, when I was not only so ready, but so anxious to meet his wishes, I could plainly see that he drew back from my proposals, and wished they had not been made. Amazed, I waited for him to speak, with a disappointment and uneasiness I cannot express.

"Mortaunt! Mortaunt!" at length broke out of the old man's very heart, "I wish to Heafen you hat nefer sait t'is! I lofe you, poy, almost as much as I lofe Dus, herself; put it griefs me—it griefs me to hear you talk of marryin' t'e gal!"

"You grieve, as much as you astonish me, Chainbearer, by making such a remark! How often have you, yourself, expressed to me the wish that I might become acquainted with your niece, and love her, and marry her! Now, when I have seen her—when I have become acquainted with her—when I love her to my heart's core, and wish to make her my wife, you meet my proposals as if they were unworthy of you and yours!"

"Not so, lat—not so. Nut'in' would make me so happy as to see you t'e huspant of Dus, supposin' it coult come to pass, ant wrong pe tone to no one; put it cannot pe so. I tid talk as you say, ant a foolish, selfish, conceitet olt man I wast for my pains. I wast t'en in t'e army, ant we wast captains alike; ant I wast t'e senior captain, ant might orter you apout, ant tid orter you apout; ant I wore an epaulette, like any ot'er captain, and hat my grandfat'er's swort at my site, ant t'ought we wast equals, ant t'at it wast an honor to marry my niece; put all t'is wast changet, lat, when I came into t'e woots ag'in, ant took up my chain, ant pegan to lif, ant to work, ant to feel poor, ant to see myself as I am. No—no—Mortaunt Littlepage, t'e owner of Ravensnest, ant t'e heir of Mooseritge, ant of Satanstoe, ant of Lilacsbush, ant of all t'e fine houses ant

stores ant farms t'at are in York ant up ant town t'e country, is not a suitaple match for Dus Malbone!"

"This is so extraordinary a notion for you to take up, Chainbearer, and so totally opposed to all I have ever before heard from you on the subject, that I must be permitted to ask where you got it?"

"From Dus Malbone, herself—yes, from her own mout', ant in her own pretty manner of speech."

"Has, then, the probability of my ever offering to your niece, been a subject of conversation between you?"

"T'at hast it—t'at hast it, ant time ant ag'in, too. Sit town on t'at log of woot, ant listen to what I haf to say, ant I will tell you t'e whole story. Susquesus, you neet n't go off into t'at corner, like a gentleman as you pe; t'ough it is only an Injin gentleman; for I haf no secrets from such a frient as yourself. Come pack, t'en, Injin, ant take your olt place, close at my site, where you haf so often peen when t'e inemy wast chargin' us poltly in front." Sureflint quietly did as desired, while Chainbearer turned toward me and continued the discourse. "You wilt see, Mortaunt, poy, t'ese here are t'e fery facts ant trut' of t'e case. When I came first from camp, ant I was full of the prite, ant aut'ority, ant feelin's of a soltier, I pegan to talk to Dus apout you, as I hat peen accustomed to talk to you apout Dus. Ant I tolt her what a fine, bolt, hantsome, generous, well-principlet young fellow you wast"—the reader will overlook my repeating that to which the partiality of the Chainbearer so readily gave utterance—"ant I tolt her of your sarfice in t'e wars, ant of your wit, ant how you mate us all laugh, t'ough we might pe marchin' into pattle, ant what a fat'er you hat, ant what a grantfat'er, ant all t'at a goot ant a warm frient ought to say of anot'er, when it wast true, ant when it wast tolt to a hantsome ant heart-whole young woman t'at he wishet to fall in love wit' t'at fery same frient. Well, I tolt t'is to Dus, not once, Mortaunt; nor twice; put twenty times, you may depent on it."

"Which makes me the more curious to hear what Dus could or did say in reply."

"It's t'at reply, lat, t'at makes all t'e present tifficulty petween us. For a long time Dus sait little or not'in'. Sometimes she woult look saucy ant laugh—ant you know, lat, t'e gal can do bot' of t'em t'ings as well as most young women. Sometimes she woult pegin to sing a song, all about fait'less young men, perhaps, ant proken-hearted virgins. Sometimes she would look sorrowful, ant I coult fint tears startin' in her eyes; ant t'en I pecome as soft and feeple-hearted as a gal, myself, to see one who smiles so easily mate to shet tears."

"But how did all this end? What can possibly have occurred, to cause this great change in your own wishes?"

"'T is not so much my wishes t'at be changet, Mortaunt, ast my opinion. If a poty coult haf t'ings just as he wishet, lat, Dus ant you shoult pe man and wife, so far as it tependet on me, pefore t'e week ist out. But we are not our own masters, nor t'e masters of what ist to happen to our nephews and nieces any more t'an we are masters of what ist to happen to ourselves. Put I wilt tell you just how it happenet. One tay, as I wast talking to t'e gal in t'e olt way, she listenet to all I hat to say more seriously t'an ast common, ant when she answeret, it was much in t'is manner: 'I t'ank you from t'e pottom of my heart, uncle Chainpearer,' she sait, 'not only for all t'at you haf tone for me, t'e orphan da'ghter of your sister, put for all you wish in my pehalf. I perceive t'at t'is itee of my marryin' your young frient, Mr. Mortaunt Littlepage, hast a strong holt on your feelin's, ant it ist time to talk seriously on t'at supject. When you associatet with t'at young gentleman, uncle Chainpearer, you wast Captain Coejemans, of t'e New York State line, ant his senior officer, ant it wast nat'ral to s'pose your niece fit to pecome his wife. Put it ist our tuty to look at what we now are, ant are likely to remain. Major Littlepage hast a fat'er ant a mot'er, I haf he'rt you say, uncle Chainpearer, ant sisters, too; now marriage ist a most serious t'ing. It ist to last for life, and no one shoult form sich a connection wit'out reflectin' on all its pearin's. It ist hardly possiple t'at people in t'e prosperity ant happiness of t'ese Littlepages woult

wish to see an only son, ant t'e heir of t'eir name ant estates, takin' for a wife a gal out of t'e woots; one t'at ist not only a chainpearer's niece, put who has peen a chainpearer herself, ant who can pring into t'eir family no one t'ing to compensate 'em for t'e sacrifice."

"And you had the heart to be quiet, Andries, and let Ursula say all this?"

"Ah! lat, how coult I help it? You woult have tone it yourself, Mortaunt, coult you haf he'rt how prettily she turnet her periots, as I haf he'rt you call it, ant how efery syllaple she sait come from t'e heart. T'en t'e face of t'e gal wast enough to convince me t'at she wast right; she looket so 'arnest, ant sat, ant peautiful, Mortaunt! No, no; when an itee comes into t'e mint, wit' t'e ait of sich worts, and looks, my poy, 't is not an easy matter to get rid of it."

"You do not seriously mean to say, Chainbearer, that you will refuse me Dus?"

"Dus will do t'at herself, lat; for she is still a chainpearer's niece, ant you are still General Littlepage's son ant heir. Try her, and see what she wilt say."

"But I have tried her, as you call it; have told her of my love; have offered my hand, and—"

"And what?"

"Why, she does not answer me as you say she answered you."

"Hast t'e gal sait she woult haf you, Mortaunt? Hast she sait yes?"

"Conditionally she has. If my grandmother cheerfully consent, and my parents do the same; and my sister Kettletas and her husband, and my laughing, merry Kate, then Dus will accept me."

"T'is ist strange! Ah! I see how it is; t'e gal has seen you, ant peen much wit' you, ant talket wit' you, ant sung wit' you, ant laughet wit' you; ant I s'pose, a'ter all, t'at will make a tifference in her judgment of you. I 'm a pachelor, Mortaunt, ant haf no wife, nor any sweetheart, put it ist easy enough to comprehent how all t'ese matters must make a fery great tifference. I 'm glat, howsefer, t'at

t'e tifference is not so great as to make t'e gal forget all your frients ; for if eferypoty consents, ant is cheerful, why t'en my pein' a chainbearer, and Dus pein' so poor ant forsaken like, will not pe so likely to be rememperet hereafter, and bring you bitter t'oughts."

"Andries Coejemans, I swear to you, I would rather become your nephew at this moment, than become the son-in-law of Washington himself, had he a daughter."

"T'at means you'd rat'er haf Dus, t'an any ot'er gal of your acquaintance. T'at's nat'ral enough, and may make me look like his Excellency, for a time, in your eyes; put when you come to t'ink and feel more coolly, my tear poy, t'ere ist t'e tanger t'at you wilt see some tifference petween t'e captain-general and commanter-in-chief of all t'e American armies, and a poor chainpearer, who in his pest tays was nut'in' more t'an a captain in t'e New York line. I know you lofe me, Mortaunt; put t'ere ist tanger t'at it might not pe exactly an uncle and nephew's love in t'e long run. I am only a poor Tutchman, when all is sait, wit'out much etication, ant wit' no money, and not much more manners; while you've peen to college, ant pe college l'arn't, ant pe as gay ant gallant a spark as can be fount in t'e States, as we call t'e olt colonies now. Wast you a Yankee, Mortaunt, I'd see you marriet ant unmarriet twenty times, pefore I'd own as much as t'is; put a man may pe sensible of his ignorance, ant pat etication, and weaknesses, wit'out wishin' to pe tolt of it to his face, and laughed at apout it, py efery A B C scholar t'at comes out of New Englant. No, no—I'm a poor Tutchman, I know; ant a poty may say as much to a frient, when he woult tie pefore he woult own t'ere wast anyt'ing poor apout it to an inimy."

"I would gladly pursue this discourse, Andries, and bring it to a happy termination," I answered; "but here come the squatters in a body, and I suppose some movement or proposal is in the wind. We will defer our matter, then; you remembering that I agree to none of your opinions or decisions. Dus is to be mine, if indeed we can protect her against the grasp of these wretches. I have something to

say on that subject, too; but this is not the moment to utter it."

Chainbearer seized my hand, and gave it a friendly pressure, which terminated the discourse. On the subject of the intentions of Thousandacres toward Dus, I was now not altogether free from uneasiness; though the tumult of rapturous feeling through which I had just passed drove it temporarily from my mind. I had no apprehension that Ursula Malbone would ever be induced, by ordinary means, to become the wife of Zephaniah; but I trembled as to what might be the influence of menaces against her uncle and myself. Nor was I altogether easy on the score of the carrying out of those menaces. It often happens with crime, as in the commission of ordinary sins, that men are impelled by circumstances, which drive them to deeds from which they would have recoiled in horror, had the consummation been directly presented to their minds, without the intervention of any mediate causes. But the crisis was evidently approaching, and I waited with as much calmness as I could assume for its development. As for Chainbearer, being still ignorant of the conversation I had overheard in the mill, he had no apprehensions of evil from the source of my greatest dread.

The day had advanced, all this time, and the sun had set and night was close upon us, as Tobit and his brethren came to the door of our prison, and called upon Chainbearer and myself to come forth, leaving Susquesus behind. We obeyed with alacrity; for there was a species of liberty in being outside of those logs, with my limbs unfettered, though a vigilant watch was kept over us both. On each side of me walked an armed man, and Chainbearer was honored with a similar guard. For all this old Andries cared but little. He knew and I knew that the time could not be very distant when we might expect to hear from Frank Malbone; and every minute that went by added to our confidence in this respect.

We were about half-way between the store-house and the dwelling of Thousandacres, toward which our steps were directed, when Andries suddenly stopped, and asked leave to

say a word to me in private. Tobit was at a loss how to take this request; but, there being an evident desire to keep on reasonably good terms with Chainbearer, after a short pause he consented to form an extended ring with his brothers, leaving me and my old friend in its centre.

"I 'll tell you what I t'ink atvisaple in t'is matter," commenced Andries, in a sort of whisper. "It cannot pe long afore Malbone will be pack wit' t'e posse ant constaples, ant so fort'; now, if we tell t'ese rapscallions t'at we want taylight to meet our inimies in, ant t'at we haf no stomach for night work, perhaps t'ey 'll carry us pack to jail, ant so gif more time to Frank to get here."

"It will be much better, Chainbearer, to prolong our interview with these squatters, so that you and I may be at large, or at least not shut up in the store-house, when Malbone makes his appearance. In the confusion we may even escape and join our friends, which will be a thousand times better than to be found within four walls."

Andries nodded his head, in sign of acquiescence, and thenceforth he seemed to aim at drawing things out, in order to gain time, instead of bringing them to a speedy conclusion. As soon as our discourse was ended, the young men closed round us again, and we moved on in a body.

Darkness being so close upon us, Thousandacres had determined to hold his court, this time, within the house, having a care to a sufficient watchfulness about the door. There is little variation in the internal distribution of the room of what may be called an American cottage. About two thirds of the space is given to the principal apartment, which contains the fireplace,[1] and is used for all the purposes of kitchen and sitting-room, while the rest of the building is partitioned into three several subdivisions. One of these subdivisions is commonly a small bedroom; another is the buttery, and the third holds the stairs, or ladders, by which to ascend to the loft, or to descend to the cellar. Such was the arrangement of the dwelling of Thousandacres, and such is the arrangement in thousands of other similar buildings

[1] At the present day, the cooking-stove has nearly superseded the open fireplace.

throughout the land. The thriving husbandman is seldom long contented, however, with such narrow and humble accommodations; but the framed house, of two stories in height, and with five windows in front, usually soon succeeds this cottage, in his case. It is rare, indeed, that any American private edifice has more than five windows in front, the few exceptions which do exist to the rule being residences of mark, and the supernumerary windows are generally to be found in wings. Some of our old, solid, substantial, stone country houses occasionally stretch themselves out to eight or nine apertures of this sort, but they are rare. I cannot gossip here, however, about country houses and windows, when I have matters so grave before me to relate.

In the forest, and especially in the newer portions of New York, the evenings are apt to be cool, even in the warm months. That memorable night, I well remember, had a sharpness about it that threatened even a frost, and Prudence had lighted a fire on the yawning hearth of her rude chimney. By the cheerful blaze of that fire, which was renewed from time to time by dried brush, the American frontier substitute for the fagot, were the scenes I am about to mention enacted.

We found all the males, and several of the females, assembled in the large apartment of the building I have described, when Chainbearer and myself entered. The wife of Tobit, with one or two of the sisterhood, however, were absent; doubtless in attendance on Dus. Lowiny, I remarked, stood quite near the fire, and the countenance of the girl seemed to me to be saddened and thoughtful. I trust I shall not be accused of being a coxcomb, if I add that the idea crossed my mind, that the appearance and manners of a youth so much superior to those with whom she was accustomed to associate had made a slight impression on this girl's—I will not say heart, for imagination would be the better word—and had awakened sympathies that manifested themselves in her previous conduct; while the shade that was now cast across her brow came quite as much from the scene she had witnessed between myself and Dus, near the rock, as from seeing me again a prisoner

The friendship of this girl might still be of importance to me, and still more so to Ursula, and I will acknowledge that the apprehension of losing it was far from pleasant. I could only wait for the developments of time, however, in order to reach any certainty on this, as well as on other most interesting topics.

Thousandacres had the civility to order us chairs, and we took our seats accordingly. On looking round that grave and attentive circle, I could trace no new signs of hostility; but, on the contrary, the countenances of all seemed more pacific than they were when we parted. I considered this as an omen that I and my friend should receive some propositions that tended toward peace. In this I was not mistaken; the first words that were uttered having that character.

"It 's time this matter atween us, Chainbearer," commenced Thousandacres himself, "should be brought to suthin' like an eend. It keeps the b'ys from their lumberin', and upsets my whull family. I call myself a reasonable man; and be as ready to settle a difficulty on as accommodatin' tarms as any parson you 'll find by lookin' up and down the land. Many is the difficulty that I 've settled in my day; and I 'm not too old to settle 'em now. Sometimes I 've fit out, when I 've fell in with an obstinate fellow; sometimes I 've left it out to men; and sometimes I 've settled matters myself. No man can say he ever knowed me to refuse to hearken to reason, or knowed me to gi'n up a just cause, so long as there was a morsel of a chance to defend it. When overpowered by numbers, and looked down by your accursed law, as you call it, I 'll own that, once or twice in my time, when young and inexper'enced, I did get the worst of it; and so was obliged to sort o' run away. But use makes parfect. I 've seen so much, by seventy odd, as to have l'arnt to take time by the forelock, and don't practyse delays in business. I look upon you, Chainbearer, as a man much like myself, reasonable, exper'enced, and willin' to accommodate. I see no great difficulty, therefore, in settlin' this matter on the spot, so as to have no more hard feelin's or hot words atween us. Sich be my notions; and I should like to hear your'n."

"Since you speak to me, T'ousantacres, in so polite and civil a manner, I 'm reaty to hear you ant to answer in t'e same temper," returned old Audries, his countenance losing much of the determined and angry expression with which he had taken his seat in the circle. "T'ere ist nut'in' t'at more pecomes a man, t'an moteration; an olt man in partic'lar. I do not t'ink, however, t'at t'ere ist much resemplance petween you ant me, T'ousantacres, in any one t'ing, except it pe in olt age. We 're pot' of us pretty well atvancet, ant haf reachet a time of life when it pehooves a man to examine ant reflect on t'e great trut's t'at are to pe fount in his piple. T'e piple ist a pook, Aaron, t'at ist not enough re't in t'e woots; t'ough Almighty Got hast all t'e same rights to t'e sacrifices and worship of his creatures in t'e forest, as to t'e worship and sarfices of his creatures in t'e settlements. I 'm not a-tellin' you t'is, T'ousantacres, py way of showin' off my own l'arnin'; for all I know on the supject, myself, I haf got from Dus, my niece, who ist as goot, ant as willin', and as hanty in explainin' sich matters, as any tominie I ever talket wit'. I wish you woult listen to her, yourself; you and Prudence; when I t'ink you woult allow t'at her tiscourse ist fery etifyin' ant improfin'. Now you seem in t'e right temper, ist a goot time to pe penefitet in t'at way; for t'ey tell me my niece ist here, ant at hant."

"She is; and I rej'ice that you have brought her name into the discourse so 'arly; as it was my design to mention it myself. I see we think alike about the young woman, Chainbearer, and trust and believe she 'll be the means of reconciling all parties, and of making us good fri'nds. I 've sent for the gal; and she 'll soon be coming along, with Tobit's wife, who sets by her wonderfully already."

"Well, talkin' of wonterful t'ings, wonters wilt never cease, I do pelieve!" Chainbearer exclaimed, for he really believed that the family of the squatter was taken suddenly with a "religious turn," and that something like a conversion was about to occur. "Yes, yes, it ist so; we meet wit wonters when we least expect 'em; and t'at it ist t'at makes wonters so wonterful!"

CHAPTER XXV.

"Yes, Hastings, these are they
Who challenge to themselves thy country's love;
The true, the constant, who alone can weigh
What glory should demand, or liberty approve!"

AKENSIDE.

A PAUSE succeeded this little opening, during which the assembly was waiting for the arrival of Ursula Malbone, and that semi-savage guardian that "set" so much by her, as not to leave her out of sight for a moment. All that time Thousandacres was ruminating on his own plans; while old Andries was probably reflecting on the singular circumstances that "wonters shoult pe so wonterful!" At length a little bustle and movement occurred near the door, the crowd collected in it opened, and Dus walked into the centre of the room, her color heightened by excitement, but her step firm, and her air full of spirit. At first, the blazing light affected her sight, and she passed a hand over her eyes. Then looking around I met her gaze, and was rewarded for all my anxiety by one of those glances into which affection knows how to infuse so much that is meaning and eloquent. I was thus favored for a moment only; those eyes still turning until they met the fond answering look of Chainbearer. The old man had arisen, and he now received his niece in his arms as a parent would embrace a beloved child.

That outpouring of feeling lasted but a little while. It had been unpremeditated and impulsive, and was almost as suddenly suppressed. It gave me, however, the happiness of witnessing one of the most pleasant sights that man can

behold; that of youth, and beauty and delicacy, and female tenderness, pouring out their feelings on the bosom of age—on the ruder qualities of one hardened in person by the exposures of a life passed in the forest. To me the contrast between the fair, golden hair of Dus, and the few straggling, bleached locks of her uncle; the downy, peach-like cheek of the girl, and the red, wrinkled, and sun-dried countenance of Chainbearer, was perfectly delightful. It said how deep must lie those sympathies of our nature, which could bring together so closely two so differently constituted in all things, and set at defiance the apparent tendencies of taste and habit.

Dus suffered herself to be thus carried away by her feelings for only a moment. Accustomed in a degree, as she certainly was, to the rough associations of the woods, this was the first time she had ever been confronted with such an assembly, and I could see that she drew back into herself with womanly reserve, as she now gazed around her, and saw in what a wild and unwonted presence she stood. Still, I had never seen her look so supremely lovely as she did that evening, for she threw Pris. Bayard and Kate, with all their advantages of dress and freedom from exposure, far into the shade. Perhaps the life of Ursula Malbone had given to her beauty the very completeness and fullness that are most apt to be wanting to the young American girl, who has been educated in the over-tender and delicate manner of our ordinary parental indulgence. Of air and exercise she had already enjoyed enough, and they had imparted to her bloom and person the richness and development that are oftener found in the subordinate than in the superior classes of the country.

As for Thousandacres, though he watched every movement of Ursula Malbone with jealous interest, he said nothing to interrupt the current of her feelings. As soon as she left her uncle's arms, however, Dus drew back and took the rude seat that I had placed for her close to Chainbearer's side. I was paid for this little act of attention by a sweet smile from its subject, and a lowering look from the old squatter, that admonished me of the necessity

of being cautious of manifesting too much of the interest I felt in the beloved object before me. As is usual in assemblages composed of the rude and unpracticed, a long, awkward pause succeeded this introduction of Dus to our presence. After a time, however, Aaron resumed the subject in hand.

"We 've met to settle all our difficulties, as I was sayin'," observed Thousandacres, in a manner as deliberative and considerate as if he were engaged in one of the most blameless pursuits of life, the outward appearances of virtue and vice possessing a surprising resemblance to each other. "When men get together on sich a purpose, and in a right spirit, it must be that there 's a fault somewhere, if what 's right can't be come at atween 'em. What 's right atwixt man and man is my creed, Chainbearer."

"What 's right petween man ant man is a goot creet, T'ousantacres; ant it 's a goot religion, too," answered Andries, coldly.

"That it is!—that it is! and I now see that you 're in a reasonable temper, Chainbearer, and that there 's a prospect of business in you. I despise a man that 's so set in his notions that there 's no gettin' him to give in an inch in a transaction—don't you hold to that too, Captain Andries?"

"T'at tepents on what t'e notions pe. Some notions do nopoty any goot, ant t'e sooner we 're rit of 'em t'e petter; while some notions pe so fery excellent t'at a man hat pest lay town his life as lay t'em town."

This answer puzzled Thousandacres, who had no idea of a man's ever dying for opinion's sake; and who was probably anxious, just at that moment, to find his companion sufficiently indifferent to principle, to make some sacrifices to expediency. It was quite evident this man was disposed to practice a *ruse* on this occasion, that is often resorted to by individuals, and sometimes by states, when disposed to gain a great advantage out of a very small right; that of demanding much more than they expect to receive, and of making a great merit of yielding points that they never had the smallest claim to maintain.

But this disposition of the squatter's will make itself sufficiently apparent as we proceed.

"I don't see any use in talkin' about layin' down lives," Thousandacres returned to Chainbearer's remark, "seein' this is not a life and death transaction at all. The most that can be made of squattin' give the law its full swing, is trespass and damages, and them ain't matters to frighten a man that has stood out agin 'em all his days. We're pretty much sich critturs as sarcumstances make us. There be men, I don't question, that a body can skear half out of their wits with a writ, while a whull flock of sheep, skins and wool united, won't intimidate them that's used to sich things. I go on the principle of doin' what's right, let the law say what it will of the matter; and this is the principle on which I wish to settle our present difficulty."

"Name your tarms—name your tarms!" cried Chainbearer, a little impatiently; "talkin' ist talkin', all t'e worlt ofer, ant actin' is actin'. If you haf anyt'ing to propose, here we are, reaty ant willin' to hear it."

"That's hearty, and just my way of thinkin' and feelin', and I'll act up to it, though it was the gospel of St. Paul himself, and I was set on followin' it. Here, then, is the case, and any man can understand it. There's two rights to all the land on 'arth, and the whull world over. One of these rights is what I call a king's right, or that which depends on writin's, and laws, and sich like contrivances; and the other depends on possession. It stands to reason, that fact is better than any writin' about it can be; but I'm willin' to put 'em on a footin' for the time bein', and for the sake of accommodatin'. I go all for accommodatin' matters, and not for stirrin' up ill blood; and that I tell Chainbearer, b'ys, is the right spirit to presarve harmony and fri'ndship!"

This appeal was rewarded by a murmur of general approbation in all that part of the audience which might be supposed to be in the squatter interest, while the part that might be called adverse remained silent, though strictly attentive, old Andries included.

"Yes, that's my principles," resumed Thousandacres,

taking a hearty draught of cider, a liquor of which he had provided an ample allowance, passing the mug civilly to Chainbearer, as soon as he had his swallow; "yes, that 's my principles, and good principles they be, for them that likes peace and harmony, as all must allow. Now, in this matter afore us, Gin'ral Littlepage and his partner ripresents writin's, and I and mine ripresent fact. I don't say which is the best, for I don't want to be hard on any man's rights, and 'specially when the accomodatin' spirit is up and doin'; but I'm fact, and the gin'ral 's pretty much writin's. But difficulties has sprung up atwixt us, and it 's high time to put 'em down. I look upon you, Chainbearer, as the fri'nd of the t'other owners of this sile, and I 'm now ready to make proposals, or to hear them, just as it may prove convenient."

"I haf no proposals to make, nor any aut'ority to offer t'em. I'm nut'in' here, put a chainpearer, wit' a contract to survey t'e patent into small lots, ant t'en my tuty ist tone. Put here ist General Littlepage's only son, and he ist empoweret, I unterstant, to do all t'at ist necessary on t'is tract, as t'e attorney—"

"He is and he is n't an attorney!" interrupted Thousandacres, a little fiercely for one in whom "the accommodatin' spirit was up." "At one moment he says he 's an attorney, and at the next he is n't. I can't stand this onsartainty any very great while."

"Pooh, pooh! T'ousantacres," returned Chainbearer, coolly, "you 're frightenet at your own shatow; ant t'at comes, let me telt you, from not lifing in 'peace ant harmony,' as you call it, yourself, wit' t'e law. A man hast a conscience, whet'er he pe a Skinner or a Cow-Boy, or efen a squatter; ant he hast it, pecause Got hast gifen it to him, ant not on account of any sarfices of his own. T'at conscience it is, t'at makes my young frient Mortaunt here an attorney in your eyes, when he ist no more of a lawyer t'an you pe yourself."

"Why has he called himself an attorney, then, and why do you call him one? An attorney is an attorney, in my eyes, and little difference is there atween 'em. Rattlesnakes

would fare better in a clearin' of Thousandacres', than the smartest attorney in the land!"

"Well, well, haf your own feelin's; for I s'pose Satan has put 'em into you, and talkin' won't pring t'em out. T'is young gentleman, however, ist no attorney of t'e sort you mean, olt squatter, put he has peen a soltier, like myself, ant in my own regiment, which wast his fat'er's, ant a prave young man he ist ant wast, and one t'at has fou't gallantly for liperty—"

"If he 's a fri'nd of liberty, he should be a fri'nd of liberty's people; should give liberty and take liberty. Now, I call it liberty to let every man have as much land as he has need on, and no more, keepin' the rest for them that 's in the same situation. If he and his father be true fri'nds of liberty, let 'em prove it like men, by giving up all claims to any more land than they want. That 's what I call liberty! Let every man have as much land as he 's need on; that 's my religion, and it 's liberty too."[1]

"Why are you so moterate, T'ousantacres? why are you so unreasonaply moterate? Why not say t'at efery man hast

[1] I am a little apprehensive that the profound political philosophers who have sprung up among us within a few years, including some in high places, and who virtually maintain that the American is so ineffably free, that it is opposed to the spirit of the institutions of the country to suffer him to be either landlord or tenant, however much he may desire it himself (and no one pretends that either law or facts compel him to be either, contrary to his own wishes), will feel mortified at discovering that they have not the merit of first proposing their own exquisite theory; Aaron Thousandacres having certainly preceded them by sixty years. There is no great secret on the subject of the principle which lies at the bottom of this favorite doctrine, the Deity himself having delivered to man, as far back as the days of Moses, the tenth commandment, with the obvious design of controlling it. An attempt to prove that the institutions of this country are unsuited to the relations of landlord and tenant is an attempt to prove that they are unsuited to meet the various contingencies of human affairs, and is an abandonment of their defence, as that defence can only be made on broad, manly, and justifiable grounds. As a political principle, it is just as true that the relations of debtor and creditor are unsuited to the institutions, and ought to be abolished.—Editor.

a right to eferything he hast need of, ant so make him comfortaple at once! T'ere is no wistom in toin' t'ings by hafs, ant it ist always petter to surfey all t'e lant you want, while t'e compass is set ant t'e chains pe goin'. It 's just as much liperty to haf a right to share in a man's tollars, as to share in his lants."

"I don't go as far as that, Chainbearer," put in Thousandacres, with a degree of moderation that ought to put the enemies of his principles to the blush. "Money is what a man 'arns himself, and he has a right to it, and so I say let him keep it; but land is necessary, and every man has a right to as much as he has need on—I would n't give him an acre more, on no account at all."

"Put money wilt puy lant; ant, in sharin' t'e tollars, you share t'e means of puyin' as much lant as a man hast neet of; t'en t'ere ist a great teal more lant ast money in t'is country, ant, in gifin' a man lant, you only gif him t'at which ist so cheap ant common, t'at he must be a poor tefil if he can't get all t'e lant he wants wit'out much trouple and any squattin', if you wilt only gif him ever so little money. No, no, T'ousantacres—you 're fery wrong; you shoult begin to tivite wit' t'e tollars, ant t'at wilt not tisturp society, as tollars are in t'e pocket, ant go ant come efery day; whereast lant is a fixture, and some people lofe t'eir own hills ant rocks ant trees—when t'ey haf peen long in a family most especially."

There was a dark scowl gathering on the brow of Thousandacres, partly because he felt himself puzzled by the upright and straightforward common-sense of Chainbearer, and partly for a reason that he himself made manifest in the answer that he quite promptly gave to my old friend's remarks.

"No man need say anything agin squattin' that wants to keep fri'nds with me," Thousandacres put in, with certain twitchings about the muscles of the mouth that were so many signs of his being in earnest. "I hold to liberty and a man's rights, and that is no reason I should be reflected on. My notions be other men's notions, I know, though they be called squatters' notions. Congressmen have held

'em, and will hold 'em ag'in, if they expect much support, in some parts of the country, at election time. I dare say the day will come, when governors will be found to hold 'em. Governors be but men a'ter all, and must hold doctrines that satisfy men's wants, or they won't be governors long.[1] But all this is nuthin' but talk, and I want to come to suthin' like business, Chainbearer. Here 's this clearin', and here 's the lumber. Now, I 'm willin' to settle on some sich tarms as these: I 'll keep the lumber, carryin' it off as soon as the water gets to be high enough, agreein' to pay for the privilege by not fellin' another tree, though I must have the right to saw up sich logs as be cut and hauled already; and then, as to the land and clearin', if the writin' owners want 'em they can have 'em by payin' for the betterments, leavin' the price out to men in this neighborhood, sin' city-bred folks can't know nothin' of the toil and labor of choppin', and loggin', and ashin', and gettin' in, and croppin' new lands."

"Mordaunt, t'at proposal ist for you. I haf nut'in' to do wit' t'e clearin' put to surfey it; ant t'at much will I perform, when I get as far ast t'e place, come t'ere goot, or come t'ere efil of it."

"Survey this clearin'!" put in Tobit, with his raven throat, and certainly in a somewhat menacing tone. "No, no, Chainbearer—the man is not out in the woods, that could ever get his chain across this clearin'."

"T'at man, I tell you, is Andries Coejemans, commonly called Chainpearer," answered my old friend, calmly. "No, clearin', ant no squatter ever stopped him yet, nor do I t'ink he will be stopped here, from performin' his tuty. Put praggin' is a pat quality, and we 'll leaf time to show t'e trut'."

Thousandacres gave a loud hem, and looked very dark, though he said nothing until time had been given to his blood to resume its customary current. Then he pursued the discourse as follows—evidently bent on keeping on good terms with Chainbearer as long as possible.

"On the whull," he said, "I rather think, Tobit, 't will

[1] Thousandacres speaks here like a veritable prophet.—EDITOR.

be best if you leave this matter altogether to me. Years cool the blood, and allow time for reason to spread. Years be as necessary to judgment as a top to a fruit-tree. I kind o' b'lieve that Chainbearer and I, being both elderly and considerate men, will be apt to get along best together. I dare say, Chainbearer, that if the surveyin' of this clearin' be put to you on the footin' of defiance, that your back would get up, like anybody else's, and you 'd bring on the chain, let who might stand in your way. But that 's neither here nor there. You 're welcome to chain out just as much of this part of the patent as you see fit, and 't will help us along so much the better when we come to the trade. Reason 's reason ; and I 'm of an accommodatin' spirit."

"So much t'e petter, T'ousantacres ; yes, so much t'e petter," answered old Andries, somewhat mollified by the conciliatory temper in which the squatter now delivered himself. "When work ist to be performet, it must pe performet ; ant, as I 'm hiret to surfey and chain t'e whole estate, t'e whole estate must pe chainet and surfeyet. Well, what else haf you to say ?"

"I am not answered as to my first offer. I 'll take the lumber, agreein' not to cut another tree, and the valie of the betterments can be left out to men."

"I am the proper person to answer this proposal," I thought it now right to say, lest Andries and Thousandacres should get to loggerheads again on some minor and immaterial point, and thus endanger every hope of keeping the peace until Malbone could arrive. "At the same time, I consider it no more than right to tell you, at once, that I have no power that goes so far as to authorize me to agree to your terms. Both Colonel Follock and my father have a stern sense of justice, and neither, in my opinion, will feel much of a disposition to yield to any conditions that, in the least, may have the appearance of compromising any of their rights as landlords. I have heard them both say that, in these particulars,' yielding an inch would be giving an ell,' and I confess that, from all I have seen lately of settlers and settlements, I 'm very much of the same way of thinking. My principals may concede something, but they 'll

never treat on a subject of which all the right is on their own side."

"Am I to understand you, young man, that you're onaccommodatin', and that my offers is n't to be listened to in the spirit in which they 're made?" demanded Thousandacres, somewhat dryly.

"You are to understand me as meaning exactly what I say, sir. In the first place, I have no authority to accept your offers, and shall not assume any, let the consequences to myself be what they may. Indeed, any promises made in duresse are good for nothing."

"Anan!" cried the squatter. "This is Mooseridge Patent, and Washington, late Charlotte County—and this is the place we are to sign and seal in, if writin's pass atween us."

"By promises made in duresse, I mean promises made while the party making them is in confinement, or not absolutely free to make them or not; such promises are good for nothing in law, even though all the 'writings' that could be drawn passed between the parties."

"This is strange doctrine, and says but little for your boasted law, then! At one time, it asks for writin's, and nothin' but writin's will answer; and then, all the writin's on 'arth be of no account! Yet some folks complain, and have hard feelin's, if a man won't live altogether up to law!"

"I rather think, Thousandacres, you overlook the objects of the law, in its naked regulations. Law is to enforce the right, and were it to follow naked rules, without regard to principles, it might become the instrument of effecting the very mischiefs it is designed to counteract."

I might have spared myself the trouble of uttering this fine speech; which caused the old squatter to stare at me in wonder, and produced a smile among the young men, and a titter among the females. I observed, however, that the anxious face of Lowiny expressed admiration, rather than the feeling that was so prevalent among the sisterhood.

"There's no use in talkin' to this young spark, Chainbearer," Thousandacres said, a little impatiently in the way

of manner, too; "he 's passed his days in the open country, and has got open-country ways, and notions, and talk; and them 's things I don't pretend to understand. You 're woods, mainly; he 's open country; and I 'm clearin'. There 's a difference atween each; but woods and clearin' come clussest; and so I 'll say my say to you. Be you, now, r'ally disposed to accommodate, or not, old Andries?"

"Anyt'ing t'at ist right, ant just, ant reasonaple, T'ousantacres; ant nut'in' t'at ist not."

"That 's just my way of thinkin'! If the law, now, would do as much as that for a man, the attorneys would soon starve. Wa-a-l, we 'll try now to come to tarms, as soon as possible. You 're a single man, I know, Chainbearer; but I 've always supposed 't was on account of no dislike to the married state; but because you did n't chance to light on the right gal; or maybe on account of the surveyin' principle, which keeps a man pretty much movin' about from tract to tract; though not much more than squattin' doos, neither, if the matter was inquired into."

I understood the object of this sudden change from fee-simples, and possessions, and the "accomodatin' spirit," to matrimony; but Chainbearer did not. He only looked his surprise; while, as to myself, if I looked at all as I felt, I must have been the picture of uneasiness. The beloved, unconscious Dus sat there in her maiden beauty, interested and anxious in her mind, beyond all question, but totally ignorant of the terrible blow that was meditated against herself. As Andries looked his desire to hear more, instead of answering the strange remark he had just heard, Thousandacres proceeded,—

"It 's quite nat'ral to think of matrimony, afore so many young folks, is n't it, Chainbearer?" added the squatter, chuckling at his own conceits. "Here 's lots of b'ys and gals about me; and I 'm just as accommodatin' in findin' husbands or wives for my fri'nds and neighbors, as I am in settlin' all other difficulties. Anything for peace and a good neighborhood is my religion!"

Old Andries passed a hand over his eyes, in the way one is apt to do when he wishes to aid a mental effort by ex-

ternal application. It was evident he was puzzled to find out what the squatter would be at, though he soon put a question that brought about something like an explanation.

"I ton't unterstant you, T'ousantacres; no, I ton't unterstant you. Is it your tesire to give me one of your puxom ant fine-lookin' gals, here, for a wife?"

The squatter laughed heartily at this notion, the young men joining in the mirth; while the constant titter that the females had kept up ever since the subject of matrimony was introduced, was greatly augmented in zest. An indifferent spectator would have supposed that the utmost good feeling prevailed among us.

"With all my heart, Chainbearer, if you can persuade any of the gals to have you!" cried Thousandacres, with the most apparent acquiescence. "With such a son-in-law, I don't know but I should take to the chain, a'ter all, and measure out my clearin's as well as the grandee farmers, who take pride in knowin' where their lines be. There 's Lowiny, she 's got no spark, and might suit you well enough, if she 'd only think so."

"Lowiny don't think any sich thing; and is n't likely to think any sich thing," answered the girl, in a quick, irritated manner.

"Wa-a-l, I do s'pose, a'ter all, Chainbearer," Thousandacres resumed, "we 'll get no weddin' out of you. Threescore-and-ten is somewhat late for takin' a first wife; though I 've known widowers marry ag'in when hard on upon ninety. When a man has taken one wife in 'arly life, he has a kind o' right to another in old age."

"Yes—yes—or a hundred either," put in Prudence, with spirit. "Give 'em a chance only, and they 'll find wives as long as they can find breath to ask women to have 'em! Gals, you may make up your minds to that—no man will mourn long for any on you, a'ter you 're once dead and buried."

I should think this little sally must have been somewhat common, as neither the "b'ys" nor the "gals" appeared to give it much attention. These matrimonial insinuations occur frequently in the world, and Prudence was not the

first woman, by a million, who had ventured to make them.

"I will own I was not so much thinkin' of providin' a wife for you, Chainbearer, as I was thinkin' of providin' one for a son of mine," continued Thousandacres. "Here 's Zephaniah, now, is as active and hard-workin', upright, honest, and obedient a young man as can be found in this country. He 's of a suitable age, and begins to think of a wife. I tell him to marry, by all means, for it 's the blessedest condition of life, is the married state, that man ever entered into. You would n't think it, perhaps, on lookin' at old Prudence, there, and beholdin' what she now is; but I speak from exper'ence in recommendin' matrimony; and I would n't on no account, say what I did n't really think in the matter. A little matrimony might settle all our difficulties, Chainbearer."

"You surely do not expect me to marry your son Zephaniah, I must s'pose, T'ousantacres!" answered Andries, innocently.

The laugh, this time, was neither as loud nor as general as before, intense expectation rendering the auditors grave.

"No, no; I 'll excuse you from that, of a sartainty, old Andries; though you may have Lowiny, if you can only prevail on the gal. But speakin' of Zephaniah, I can r'ally ricommend the young man; a thing I 'd never do if he did n't desarve it, though he is my son. No one can say that I 'm in the habit of ever ricommendin' my own things, even to the boards. The lumber of Thousandacres is as well known in all the markets below, they tell me, as the flour of any miller in the highest credit. It 's just so with the b'ys, better lads is not to be met with; and I can ricommend Zephaniah with just as much confidence as I could ricommend any lot of boards I ever rafted."

"Ant what haf I to do wit' all t'is?" asked Chainbearer, gravely.

"Why, the matter is here, Chainbearer, if you 'll only look a little into it. There 's difficulty atween us, and pretty serious difficulty, too. In me the accommodatin' spirit is up, as I 've said afore, and am willin' to say ag'in. Now I 've

my son Zeph, here, as I 've said, and he 's lookin' about for a wife ; and you 've a niece here—Dus Malbone, I s'pose is her name—and they 'd just suit each other. It seems they 're acquainted somewhat, and have kept company some time already, and that 'll make things smooth. Now what I offer is just this, and no more ; not a bit of it. I offer to send off for a magistrate, and I 'll do 't at my own expense ; it shan't cost you a farthin' ; and as soon as the magistrate comes, we 'll have the young folks married on the spot, and that will make eternal peace forever, as you must suppose, atween you and me. Wa-a-l, peace made atween us, 't will leave but little to accommodate with the writin' owners of the sile, seein' that you 're on tarms with 'em all, that a body may set you down all as one as bein' of the same family, like. If Gin'ral Littlepage makes a p'int of anything of the sort, I'll engage no one of my family, in all futur' time, shall ever squat on any lands he may happen to lay claim to, whether he owns 'em or not."

I saw quite plainly that at first Chainbearer did not fully comprehend the nature of the squatter's proposal. Neither did Dus herself; though somewhat prepared for such a thing by her knowledge of Zephaniah's extravagant wishes on the subject. But when Thousandacres spoke plainly of sending for a magistrate, and of having the "young folks married on the spot," it was not easy to mistake his meaning, and astonishment was soon succeeded by offended pride, in the breast of old Andries, and that to a degree and in a manner I had never before witnessed in him. Perhaps I ought, in justice to my excellent friend, to add that his high principles and keen sense of right were quite as much wounded by the strange proposal as his personal feelings. It was some time before he could or would speak ; when he did, it was with a dignity and severity of manner which I really had no idea he could assume. The thought of Ursula Malbone's being sacrificed to such a being as Zephaniah, and such a family as the squatter's, shocked all his sensibilities, and appeared, for a moment, to overcome him. On the other hand, nothing was plainer than that the breed of Thousandacres saw no such violation of the proprieties in their scheme. The vul-

gar almost invariably, in this country, reduce the standard of distinction to mere money; and in this respect they saw, or fancied they saw, that Dus was not much better off than they were themselves. All those points which depended on taste, refinement, education, habits, and principles were Hebrew to them; and, quite as a matter of course, they took no account of qualities they could neither see nor comprehend. It is not surprising, therefore, that they could imagine the young squatter might make a suitable husband to one who was known to have carried chain in the forest.

"I pelieve I do begin to unterstant you, T'ousantacres," said the Chainbearer, rising from his chair, and moving to the side of his niece, as if instinctively to protect her; "t'ough it ist not a fery easy t'ing to comprehent such a proposal. You wish Ursula Malpone to become t'e wife of Zephaniah T'ousantacres, ant t'ereupon you wish to patch up a peace wit' General Littlepage and Colonel Follock, ant optain an intemnity for all t'e wrong ant roppery you haf done 'em—"

"Harkee, old Chainbearer; you 'd best be kearful of your language—"

"Hear what t'at language ist to pe, pefore you interrupt me, T'ousantacres. A wise man listens pefore he answers. Alt'ough I haf nefer peen marriet myself, I know what ist tecent in pehavior, ant, t'erefore, I wilt t'ank you for t'e wish of pein' connectet wit' t'e Coejemans ant t'e Malpones. T'at tuty tone, I wish to say t'at my niece wilt not haf your poy—"

"You haven't given the gal a chance to speak for herself," cried Thousandacres, at the top of his voice, for he began to be agitated now with a fury that found a little vent in that manner. "You haven't given the gal a chance to answer for herself, old Andries. Zeph is a lad that she may go farther and fare worse, afore she 'll meet his equal, I can tell you, though perhaps, bein' the b'y's own father, I should n't say it—but, in the way of accommodatin', I 'm willin' to overlook a great deal."

"Zephaniah 's an excellent son," put in Prudence, in the

pride and feeling of a mother, nature having its triumph in her breast as well as in that of the most cultivated woman of the land. "Of all my sons, Zephaniah is the best; and I account him fit to marry with any who don't live in the open country, and with many that do."

"Praise your goots, ant extol your poy, if you see fit," answered Chainbearer, with a calmness that I knew bespoke some desperate resolution. "Praise your goots, ant extol your poy; I'll not teny your right to do as much of t'at as you wish; put t'is gal wast left me py an only sister on her tyin' pet, ant may Got forget me, when I forget the tuty I owe to her. She shalt nefer marry a son of T'ousantacres—she shalt nefer marry a squatter—she shalt nefer marry any man t'at ist not of a class, ant feelin's, ant hapits, ant opinions, fit to pe t'e huspant of a laty!"

A shout of derision, in which was blended the fierce resentment of mortified pride, arose among that rude crew but the thundering voice of Thousandacres made itself audible, even amid the hellish din.

"Beware, Chainbearer! beware how you aggravate us; natur' can't and won't bear everything."

"I want nut'in' of you or yours, T'ousantacres," calmly returned the old man, passing his arm around the waist of Dus, who clung to him, with a cheek that was flushed to fire, but an eye that was not accustomed to quail, and who seemed, at that fearful moment, every way ready and able to second her uncle's efforts. "You're nut'in' to me, ant I'll leaf you here, in your misteets and wicket t'oughts. Stant asite, I orter you. Do not tare to stop t'e brod'er who is apout to safe his sister's da'ghter from pecomin' a squatter's wife. Stant asite, for I'll stay wit' you no longer. An hour or two hence, miserable Aaron, you'll see t'e folly of all t'is, ant wish you hat livet an honest man."

By this time the clamor of voices became so loud and confused, as to render it impossible to distinguish what was said. Thousandacres actually roared like a maddened bull, and he was soon hoarse with uttering his menaces and maledictions. Tobit said less, but was probably more dangerous. All the young men seemed violently agitated, and

bent on closing the door on the exit of the Chainbearer, who, with his arm around Dus, still slowly advanced, waving the crowd aside, and commanding them to make way for him, with a steadiness and dignity that I began to think would really prevail. In the midst of this scene of confusion, a rifle suddenly flashed ; the report was simultaneous, and old Andries Coejemans fell.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Ye midnight shades, o'er nature spread!
Dumb silence of the dreary hour!
In honor of th'.approaching dead,
Around your awful terrors pour.
Yes, pour around
On this pale ground,
Through all this deep surrounding gloom,
The sober thought,
The tear untaught,
Those meetest mourners at a tomb."

MALLET.

IT is a law of human nature, that the excesses of passion bring their own rebukes. The violence of man feeds itself, until some enormity committed under its influence suddenly rises before the transgressor, as the evidence of his blindness and the restorer of his senses. Guilt performs the office of reason, staying the hand, stilling the pulses, and arousing the conscience.

Thus it seemed to be with the squatters of Mooseridge. A stillness so profound succeeded the crack of that rifle that I heard the stifled breathing of Dus, as she stood over the body of her uncle, astounded, and almost converted into a statue by the suddenness of the blow. No one spoke; no one attempted to quit the place; in fact, no one moved. It was never known who fired that shot. At first I ascribed it to the hand of Tobit; but it was owing more to what I knew of his temper and character, than to what I knew of his acts at that particular time. Afterward, I inclined to the opinion that my friend had fallen by the hand of Thousandacres himself; though there were no means of bring-

ing it home to him by legal proof. If any knew who was the criminal, besides the wretch who executed the deed, the fact was never revealed. That family was faithful to itself, and seemed determined to stand or fall together. In the eye of the law, all who were present, aiding and abetting in the unlawful detention of Dus and her uncle, were equally guilty; but the hand on which the stain of blood rested in particular was never dragged to light.

My first impulse, as soon as I could recollect myself, was to pass an arm around the waist of Dus and force her through the crowd, with a view to escape. Had this attempt been persevered in, I think it would have succeeded, so profound was the sensation made, even upon those rude and lawless men, by the deed of violence that had just been done. But Dus was not one to think of self at such a moment. For a single instant her head fell on my shoulder, and I held her to my bosom, while I whispered my wish for her to fly. Then raising her head, she gently extricated her person from my arms, and knelt by the side of her uncle.

"He breathes!" she said huskily, but hastily. "God be praised, Mordaunt, he still breathes. The blow may not be as heavy as we at first supposed; let us do what we can to aid him."

Here were the characteristic decision and thoughtfulness of Ursula Malbone! Rising quickly, she turned to the group of silent but observant squatters, and appealed to any remains of humanity that might still be found in their bosoms to lend their assistance. Thousandacres stood foremost in the dark cluster at the door, looking grimly at the motionless body, over which Dus stood, pale and heart-stricken, but still calm and collected.

"The hardest-hearted man among you will not deny a daughter's right to administer to a parent's wants!" she said, with a pathos in her voice, and a dignity in her manner, that filled me with love and admiration, and which had a visible effect on all who heard her. "Help me to raise my uncle and to place him on a bed, while Major Littlepage examines his hurt. You 'll not deny me this little comfort,

'Thousandacres, for you cannot know how soon you may want succor yourself!"

Zephaniah, who certainly had no hand in the murder of Chainbearer, now advanced; and he, myself, Lowiny, and Dus raised the still motionless body, and placed it on the bed of Prudence, which stood in the principal room. There was a consultation among the squatters, while we were thus employed, and one by one the family dropped off, until no one was left in the house but Thousandacres and his wife, and Lowiny; the latter remaining with Dus, as a useful and even an affectionate assistant. The father sat, in moody silence, on one side of the fire, while Prudence placed herself on the other. I did not like the aspect of the squatter's countenance, but he said and did nothing. It struck me he was brooding over the facts, nursing his resentments by calling up fancied wrongs to his mind, and plotting for the future. If such was the case, he manifested great nerve, inasmuch as neither alarm nor hurry was, in the slightest degree, apparent in his mien. Prudence was dreadfully agitated. She said nothing, but her body worked to and fro with nervous excitement; and occasionally a heavy, but suppressed groan struggled through her efforts to resist it. Otherwise, she was as if not present.

I had been accustomed to seeing gun-shot wounds, and possessed such a general knowledge of their effects as to be a tolerable judge of what would, and what would not, be likely to prove fatal. The first look I took at the hurt of Chainbearer convinced me there could be no hope for his life. The ball had passed between two of the ribs, and seemed to me to take a direction downward; but it was impossible to miss the vitals with a wound commencing at that point on the human body. The first shock of the injury had produced insensibility; but we had hardly got the sufferer on the bed, and applied a little water to his lips, ere he revived; soon regaining his consciousness, as well as the power to speak. Death was on him, however; and it was very obvious to me that his hours were numbered. He might live days, but it was not possible for him to survive.

"Got pless you, Mortaunt," my old friend murmured,

after my efforts had thus partially succeeded. "Got forever pless ant preserf you, poy, ant repay you for all your kintness to me ant mine. T'em squatters haf killet me, lat; put I forgif t'em. T'ey are an ignorant, ant selfish, ant prutal preed; ant I may haf triet 'em too sorely. Put Dus can never pecome t'e wife of any of t'e family."

As Zephaniah was in the room, though not near the bed at the moment, I was anxious to change the current of the wounded man's thoughts; and I questioned him as to the nature of his hurt, well knowing that Chainbearer had seen so many soldiers in situations similar to his own unhappy condition, as to be a tolerable judge of his actual state.

"I 'm killet, Mortaunt," old Andries answered, in a tone even firmer than that in which he had just spoken. "Apout t'at, t'ere can pe no mistake. T'ey haf shot t'rough my rips, and t'rough my vitals; ant life is impossible. But t'at does not matter much to me, for I am an olt man now, hafin' lifet my t'reescore years ant ten—no, t'at is no great matter, t'ough some olt people cling to life wit' a tighter grip t'an t'e young. Such ist not my case, howsefer; ant I am reaty to march when t'e great wort of commant comet'. I am fery sorry, Mortaunt, t'at t'is accitent shoult happen pefore t'e patent hast peen fully surfeyet; but I am not pait for t'e work t'at is finishet, ant it ist a great comfort to me to know I shall not tie in tebt. I owe you, ant I owe my goot frient t'e general, a great teal for kintnesses, I must confess; put, in t'e way of money, t'ere wilt be no loss by t'is accitent."

"Mention nothing of this sort, I do entreat of you, Chainbearer; I know my father would gladly give the best farm he owns to see you standing, erect and well, as you were twenty minutes since."

"Well, I tares to say t'at may be true, for I haf always fount t'e general to pe friently and consiterate. I wilt tell you a secret, Mortaunt, t'at I haf never pefore revealet to mortal man, put which t'ere ist no great use in keepin' any longer, ant which I shoult have peen willing to haf tolt long ago, hat not t'e general himself mate it a p'int t'at I shoult not speak of it—"

"Perhaps it might be better, my good friend, were you to tell me this secret another time. Talking may weary and excite you; whereas, sleep and rest may possibly do you service."

"No, no, poy; t'e hope of t'at ist all itleness ant vanity. I shalt nefer sleep ag'in, tilt I sleep t'e last long sleep of teat'; I feelt sartain my wount ist mortal, ant t'at my time must soon come. Nefert'eless, it does n't gif me pain to talk; ant, Mortaunt, my tear lat, fri'nts t'at pe apout to part for so long a time, ought not to part wit'out sayin' a wort to one anot'er pefore separation. I shoult pe glat, in partic'lar, to telt to a son all t'e kintness and fri'ntship I have receivet from his fat'er. You know fery well, yourself, Mortaunt, t'at I am not great at figures; and why it shoult pe so ist a wonter ant a surprise to me, for my grantfat'er Van Syce was a wonterful man at arit'metic, and t'e first Coejemans in t'is country, t'ey say, kept all t'e tominie's accounts for him! Put, let t'at pe ast wast, I nefer coult do anyt'ing wit' figures; ant it ist a secret not to pe concealet now, Mortaunt, t'at I nefer coult haf helt my commission of captain six weeks, put for your own fat'er's kintness to me. Fintin' out how impossible it wast for me to get along wit' arit'metic, he offeret to do all t'at sort of tuty for me, ant t'e whole time we wast toget'er, seven long years ant more, Colonel Littlepage mate out t'e reports of Coejeman's company. Capital goot reports was t'ey, too, ant t'e atmiration of all t'at see t'em; and I often felt ashamet like, when I he'rt t'em praiset, and people wonterin' how an olt Tutchman ever l'arnet to do his tuty so well! I shalt nefer see t'e general ag'in, ant I wish you to tell him t'at Andries tit not forget his gootness to him, to t'e latest preat t'at he trew."

"I will do all you ask of me, Chainbearer—surely it must give you pain to talk so much?"

"Not at all, poy—not at all. It is goot to t'e poty to lighten t'e soul of its opligations. Ast I see, howsefer, t'at Dus ist trouplet, I wilt shut my eyes, ant look into my own t'oughts a little, for I may not tie for some hours yet."

It sounded fearful to me to hear one I loved so well speak

so calmly, and with so much certainty, of his approaching end. I could see that Ursula almost writhed under the agony these words produced in her; yet that noble-minded creature wore an air of calmness that might have deceived one who knew her less well than she was known to me. She signed for me to quit the side of the bed, in the vain hope that her uncle might fall asleep, and placed herself silently on a chair, at hand, in readiness to attend his wants. As for me, I took the occasion to examine the state of things without, and to reflect on what course I ought to take, in the novel and desperate circumstances in which we were so unexpectedly placed; the time for something decisive having certainly arrived.

It was now near an hour after the deed had been done—and there sat Thousandacres and his wife, one on each side of the fire, in silent thought. As I turned to look at the squatter and the father of squatters, I saw that his countenance was set in that species of sullen moodiness, which might well be taken as ominous in a man of his looseness of principle and fierceness of temperament. Nor had the nervous twitchings of Prudence ceased. In a word, both of these strange beings appeared at the end of that hour just as they had appeared at its commencement. It struck me, as I passed them in moving toward the door, that there was even a sublimity in their steadiness in guilt. I ought, however, in some slight degree to except the woman, whose agitation was some proof that she repented of what had been done. At the door itself, I found no one; but two or three of the young men were talking in a low tone to each other at no great distance. Apparently they had an eye to what was going on within the bullding. Still no one of them spoke to me, and I began to think that the crime already committed had produced such a shock, that no further wrong to any of us was contemplated, and that I might consider myself at liberty to do and act as I saw fit. A twitch at my sleeve, however, drew my look aside, and I saw Lowiny cowering within the shadows of the house, seemingly eager to attract my attention. She had been absent some little time, and had probably been listening to the discourse of those without.

"Don't think of venturing far from the house," the girl whispered. "The evil spirit has got possession of Tobit; and he has just sworn the same grave shall hold you, and Chainbearer, and Dus. 'Graves don't turn state's evidence,' he says. I never know'd him to be so awful as he is to-night; though he's dreadful in temper when anything goes amiss."

The girl glided past me as she ceased her hurried communication, and the next instant she was standing quietly at the side of Dus, in readiness to offer her assistance in any necessary offer for the sick. I saw that she had escaped notice, and then reconnoitered my own position with some little care.

By this time the night had got to be quite dark; and it was impossible to recognize persons at the distance of twenty feet. It is true, one could tell a man from a stump at twice that number of yards, or even farther; but the objects of the rude clearing began to be confounded together in a way to deprive the vision of much of its customary power. That group of young men, as I suppose, contained the formidable Tobit; but I could be by no means certain of the fact, without approaching quite near to it. This I did not like to do, as there was nothing that I desired particularly to say to any of the family at the moment. Could they have known my heart, the squatters would have felt no uneasiness on the subject of my escaping, for were Dus quite out of the question, as she neither was nor could be, it would be morally impossible for me to desert the Chainbearer in his dying moments. Nevertheless, Tobit and his brethren did not know this; and it might be dangerous for me to presume too far on the contrary supposition.

The darkness was intensest near the house, as a matter of course; and I glided along close to the walls of logs until I reached an angle of the building, thinking the movement might be unseen. But I got an assurance that I was watched that would admit of no question, by a call from one of the young men, directing me not to turn the corner or to go out of sight in any direction at the peril of my life. This was plain speaking; and it induced a short dialogue between

us; in which I avowed my determination not to desert my friends—for the Chainbearer would probably not outlive the night—and that I felt no apprehension for myself. I was heated and excited, and had merely left the house for air; if they offered no impediment I would walk to and fro near them for a few minutes, solely with a view to refresh my feverish pulses; pledging my word to make no attempt at escape. This explanation, with the accompanying assurance, seemed to satisfy my guard; and I was quietly permitted to do as I had proposed.

The walk I selected was between the group of squatters and the house, and at each turn it necessarily brought me close to the young men. At such moments I profited by my position to look in through the doors of the dwelling at the motionless form of Dus, who sat at the bedside of her uncle in the patient, silent, tender, and attentive manner of woman, and whom I could plainly see in thus passing. Notwithstanding the fidelity of my homage to my mistress at these instants, I could perceive that the young men uniformly suspended the low dialogue they were holding together, as I approached them, and as uniformly renewed it as I moved away. This induced me gradually to extend my walk, lengthening it a little on each end, until I may have gone as far as a hundred feet on each side of the group, which I took for the centre. To have gone farther would have been imprudent, as it might seem preparatory to an attempt at escape, and to a consequent violation of my word.

In this manner, then, I may have made eight or ten turns in as many minutes, when I heard a low hissing sound near me, while at the extremity of one of my short promenades. A stump stood there, and the sound came from the root of the stump. At first I fancied I had encroached on the domain of some serpent; though animals of that species, which would be likely to give forth such a menace, were even then very rare among us. But my uncertainty was soon relieved.

"Why you no stop at stump?" said Susquesus, in a voice so low as not to be heard at the distance of ten feet, while it

was perfectly distinct and not in a whisper. "Got sut'in' to tell—glad to hear."

"Wait until I can make two or three more turns; I will come back in a moment," was my guarded answer.

Then I continued my march, placing myself against a stump that stood at the other end of the walk, remaining leaning there for an entire minute or two, when I returned, passing the young men as before. This I did three several times, stopping at each turn, as if to rest or reflect; and making each succeeding halt longer than the one that had preceded it. At length I took my stand against the very stump that concealed the Indian.

"How came you here, Susquesus?" I asked; "and are you armed?"

"Yes; got good rifle. Chainbearer's gun. He no want him any longer, eh?"

"You know then what has happened? Chainbearer is mortally wounded."

"Dat bad—must take scalp to pay for dat! Ole fri'nd—good fri'nd. Always kill murderer."

"I beg nothing of the sort will be attempted; but how came you here?—and how came you armed?"

"Jaap do him—come and break open door. Nigger strong—do what he like to. Bring rifle—say take him. Wish he come sooner—den Chainbearer no get kill. We see."

I thought it prudent to move on by the time this was said; and I made a turn or two ere I was disposed to come to another halt. The truth, however, was now apparent to me. Jaap had come in from the forest, forced the fastenings of the Onondago's prison, given him arms, and they were both out in the darkness, prowling round the building, watching for the moment to strike a blow, or an opportunity to communicate with me. How they had ascertained the fact of Chainbearer's being shot, I was left to conjecture; though Susquesus must have heard the report of the rifle; and an Indian, on such a night as that, left to pursue his own course, would soon ascertain all the leading points of any circumstance in which he felt an interest.

My brain was in a whirl as all these details presented themselves to my mind, and I was greatly at a loss to decide on my course. In order to gain time for reflection, I stopped a moment at the stump, and whispered to the Onondago a request that he would remain where he was until I could give him his orders. An expressive "good" was the answer I received, and I observed that the Indian crouched lower in his lair, like some fierce animal of the woods, that restrained his impatience, in order to make his leap, when it did come, more certain and fatal.

I had now a little leisure for reflection. There lay poor Chainbearer, stretched on his death-pallet, as motionless as if the breath had already left his body. Dus maintained her post, nearly as immovable as her uncle; while Lowiny stood at hand, manifesting the sympathy of her sex in the mourning scene before her. I caught glimpses, too, in passing, of Thousandacres and Prudence. It appeared to me as if the first had not stirred, from the moment when he had taken his seat on the hearth. His countenance was as set, his air as moody, and his attitude as stubborn, as each had been in the first five minutes after the Chainbearer fell. Prudence, too, was as unchanged as her husband. Her body continued to rock, in nervous excitement, but not once had I seen her raise her eyes from the stone of the rude hearth that covered nearly one half of the room. The fire had nearly burned down, and, no one replenishing the brush which fed it, a flickering flame alone remained to cast its wavering light over the forms of these two conscience-stricken creatures, rendering them still more mysterious and forbidding. Lowiny had indeed lighted a thin, miserable candle of tallow, such as one usually sees in the lowest habitations; but it was placed aside, in order to be removed from before the sight of the supposed slumberer, and added but little to the light of the room. Notwithstanding, I could and did see all I have described, stopping for some little time at a point that commanded a view of the interior of the house.

Of Dus, I could ascertain but little. She was nearly immovable at the bedside of her uncle, but her countenance was

veiled from view. Suddenly, and it was at one of those moments when I had stopped in front of the building, she dropped on her knees, buried her face in the coverlet, and became lost in prayer. Prudence started as she saw this act; then she arose, after the fashion of those who imagine they have contributed to the simplicity, and consequently to the beauty of worship, by avoiding the ceremony of kneeling to Almighty God, and stood erect, moving to and fro, as before, her tall, gaunt figure resembling some half-decayed hemlock of the adjacent forest, that has lost the greater portion of its verdure, rocked by a tempest. I was touched, notwithstanding, at this silent evidence that the woman retained some of the respect and feeling for the services of the Deity, which, though strangely blended with fanaticism and a pertinacious self-righteousness, no doubt had a large influence in bringing those who belonged to her race across the Atlantic, some five or six generations previously to her own.

It was just at this instant that I recognized the voice of Tobit, as he advanced toward the group composed of his brethren; and speaking to his wife, who accompanied him as far as his father's habitation, and there left him, apparently to return to her own. I did not distinguish what was said, but the squatter spoke sullenly, and in the tone of one whose humor was menacing. Believing that I might meet with some rudeness of a provoking character from this man, should he see me walking about in the manner I had now been doing for near a quarter of an hour, ere he had the matter explained, I thought it wisest to enter the building, and effect an object I had in view, by holding a brief conversation with Thousandacres.

This determination was no sooner formed than I put it in execution; trusting that the patience of the Indian, and Jaap's habits of obedience, would prevent anything like an outbreak from them, without orders. As I re-entered the room, Dus was still on her knees, and Prudence continued erect, oscillating as before, with her eyes riveted on the hearth. Lowiny stood near the bed, and I thought, like her mother, she was in some measure mingling in spirit, with the prayer.

"Thousandacres," I commenced in a low voice, drawing quite near to the squatter, and succeeding in causing him to look at me by my address, "Thousandacres, this has been a most melancholy business, but everything should be done that can be done, to repair the evil. Will you not send a messenger through to the 'Nest, to obtain the aid of the physician?"

"Doctors can do but little good to a wound made by a rifle that was fired so cluss, young man. I want no doctors here, to betray me and mine to the law."

"Nay, your messenger can keep your secret; and I will give him gold to induce the physician to come, and come at once. He can be told that I am accidentally hurt, and might still reach us to be of service in alleviating pain; I confess there is no hope for anything else."

"Men must take their chances," coldly returned that obdurate being. "Them that live in the woods take woodsmen's luck; and them that live in the open country, the open-country luck. My family and lumber must be presarved at all risks; and no doctor shall come here."

What was to be done—what could be done, with such a being? All principle, all sense of right, was concentrated in self—in his moral system. It was as impossible to make him see the side of any question that was opposed to his interests, fancied or real, as it was to give sight to the physically blind. I had hoped contrition was at work upon him, and that some advantage might be obtained through the agency of so powerful a mediator; but no sooner was his dull nature aroused into anything like action, than it took the direction of selfishness, as the needle points to the pole.

Disgusted at this exhibition of the most confirmed trait of the squatter's character, I was in the act of moving from him, when a loud shout arose around the building, and the flashes and reports of three or four rifles were heard. Rushing to the door, I was in time to hear the tramp of men, who seemed to me to be pushing forward in all directions; and the crack of the rifle was occasionally heard, apparently retiring toward the woods. Men called to each other, in the

excitement of a chase and conflict; but I could gain no information, the body of darkness which had settled on the place having completely hidden everything from view at any distance.

In this state of most painful doubt I continued for five or six minutes, the noise of the chase receding the whole time, when a man came rushing up to the door of the hut where I stood, and seizing my hand, I found it was Frank Malbone. The succor, then, had arrived, and I was no longer a captive.

"God be praised! you at least are safe," cried Malbone. "But my dear sister?"

"Is there unharmed, watching by the side of her uncle's dying bed. Is any one hurt without?"

"That is more than I can tell you. Your black acted as guide, and brought us down on the place so skilfully, that it was not my intention to resort to arms at all, since we might have captured all the squatters without firing a shot, had my orders been observed. But a rifle was discharged from behind a stump, and this drew a volley from the enemy. Some of our side returned the discharge, and the squatters then took to flight. The firing you have just heard is scattered discharges that have come from both sides, and can be only sound, as any aim is impossible in this obscurity. My own piece has not even been cocked, and I regret a rifle has been fired."

"Perhaps all is then well, and we have driven off our enemies without doing them any harm. Are you strong enough to keep them at a distance?"

"Perfectly so; we are a posse of near thirty men, led by an under-sheriff and a magistrate. All we wanted was a direction to this spot, to have arrived some hours earlier."

I groaned in spirit at hearing this, since those few hours might have saved the life of poor Chainbearer. As it was, however, this rescue was the subject of grateful rejoicing, and one of the happiest moments of my life was that in which I saw Dus fall on her brother's bosom and burst into tears. I was at their side, in the doorway of the hut, when this meeting took place; and Dus held out a hand affection-

ately to me, as she withdrew herself from her brother's arms. Frank Malbone looked a little surprised at this act; but, anxious to see and speak to Chainbearer, he passed into the building, and approached the bed. Dus and I followed; for the shouts and firing had reached the ears of the wounded man, and Andries was anxious to learn their meaning. The sight of Malbone let him into a general knowledge of the state of the facts; but a strong anxiety was depicted in his falling countenance, as he looked toward me for information.

"What is it, Mortaunt?" he asked with considerable strength of voice, his interest in the answer probably stimulating his physical powers. "What is it, poy? I hope t'ere hast peen no useless fightin' on account of a poor olt man like me, who hast seen his t'reescore years ant ten, ant who owest to his Maker t'e life t'at wast grantet to him seventy long years ago. I hope no one hast peen injuret in so poor a cause."

"We know of no one beside yourself, Chainbearer, who has been hurt to-night. The firing you have heard comes from the party of Frank Malbone, which has just arrived, and which has driven off the squatters by noise more than by any harm that has been done them."

"Got pe praiset! Got pe praiset! I am glat to see Frank pefore I tie, first to take leaf of him, as an olt frient, ant secontly to place his sister, Dus, in his care. T'ey haf wantet to gif Dus one of t'ese squatters for a huspant, by way of making peace petween t'ieves ant honest people. T'at woult nefer do, Frank, as you well know. Dus ist t'e ta'ghter of a gentleman, ant t'e ta'ghter of a laty; ant she ist a gentlewoman herself, ant ist not to pe marriet to a coarse, rute, illiterate, vulgar squatter. Wast I young, ant wast I not t'e gal's uncle, I shoult not venture to s'pose I coult make her a fit companion myself, peing too little edicated ant instructet, to pe t'e huspant of one like Dus Malpone."

"There is no fear now, that any such calamity can befall my sister, my dear Chainbearer," answered Frank Malbone. "Nor do I think any threats or dangers could so

far intimidate Dus, as to cause her to plight her faith to any man she did not love or respect. They would have found my sister difficult to coerce."

"It ist pest ast it ist, Frank—yes, it ist pest ast it ist. T'ese squatters are fery sat rascals, ant woult not pe apt to stop at trifles. Ant, now we are on t'is supject, I wilt say a wort more consarnin' your sister. I see she hast gone out of t'e hut to weep, ant she wilt not hear what I haf to say. Here ist Mortaunt Littlepage, who says he lofes Dus more ast man efer lovet woman pefore"—Frank started, and I fancied that his countenance grew dark—"ant what ist nat'ral enough, when a man dost truly lofe a woman in t'at tegree, he wishes fery, fery much to marry her"—Frank's countenance brightened immediately, and seeing my hand extended toward him, he grasped it and gave it a most cordial pressure. "Now, Mortaunt woult pe an excellent match for Dus—a most capital match, for he ist young ant goot-lookin', and prave, ant honoraple, ant sensiple, ant rich, all of which pe fery goot t'ings in matrimony; put, on t'e ot'er hant, he hast a fat'er, ant a mot'er, ant sisters, ant it ist nat'ral, too, t'at t'ey shoult not like, overmuch, to haf a son ant a prot'er marry a gal t'at has n't anyt'ing put a set of chains, a new compass, ant a few fielt articles t'at wilt fall to her share a'ter my teat'. No, no; we must t'ink of t'e honor of t'e Coejemans ant t'e Malpones, ant not let our peloved gal go into a family t'at may not want her."

I could see that Frank Malbone smiled, though sadly, as he listened to this warning; for, on him, it made little or no impression, since he was generous enough to judge me by himself, and did not believe any such mercenary considerations would influence my course. I felt differently, however. Obstinacy in opinion was one of the weak points in Chainbearer's character, and I saw the danger of his leaving these sentiments as a legacy to Dus. She, indeed, had been the first to entertain them, and to communicate them to her uncle, and they might revive in her when she came to reflect on the true condition of things, and become confirmed by the dying requests of her uncle.

It is true, that in our own interview, when I obtained from the dear girl the precious confession of her love, no such obstacle seemed to exist, but both of us appeared to look forward with confidence to our future union as to a thing certain; but at that moment, Dus was excited by my declarations of the most ardent and unutterable attachment, and led away by the strength of her own feelings. We were in the delirium of delight produced by mutual confidence, and the full assurance of mutual love, when Thousandacres came upon us, to carry us to the scenes of woe by which we had been, and were still, in a degree, surrounded. Under such circumstances, one might well fall under the influence of feelings and emotions that would prove to be more controllable in cooler moments. It was all-important, then, for me to set Chainbearer right in the matter, and to have a care he did not quit us, leaving the two persons he most loved on earth, very unnecessarily miserable; and that solely on account of the strength of his own prejudices. Nevertheless, the moment was not favorable to pursue such a purpose, and I was reflecting bitterly on the future, when we were all startled by a heavy groan that seemed to come out of the very depths of the chest of the squatter.

Frank and I turned instinctively toward the chimney, on hearing this unlooked-for interruption. The chair of Prudence was vacant, the woman having rushed from the hut, at the first sound of the recent alarm; most probably, in quest of her younger children. But Thousandacres remained in the very seat he had now occupied nearly, if not quite, two hours. I observed, however, that his form was not as erect as when previously seen. It had sunk lower in the chair, while his chin hung down upon his breast. Advancing nearer, a small pool of blood was seen on the stones beneath him, and a short examination told Malbone and myself, that a rifle-bullet had passed directly through his body, in a straight line, and that only three inches above the hips!

CHAPTER XXVII.

"With woeful measures, wan despair—
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled,
A solemn, strange, and mingled air:
'T was sad by fits, by starts 't was wild."

COLLINS.

THOUSANDACRES had been shot in his chair, by one of the rifles first discharged that night. As it turned out, he was the only one that we could ascertain was hurt; though there was a report, to which many persons gave credence, that Tobit had a leg broken, also, and that he remained a cripple for life. I am inclined to believe this report may have been true; for Jaap told me, after all was over that he let fly on a man who had just fired on himself, and who certainly fell, and was borne off limping, by two of his companions. It is quite probable that this hurt of Tobit's, and the fate of his father, was the reason we received no more annoyance that night from the squatters, who had all vanished from the clearing so effectually, including most of the females and all the children, that no traces of their place of retreat were to be found next morning. Lowiny, however, did not accompany the family, but remained near Dus, rendering herself highly useful as an attendant in the melancholy scene that followed. I may as well add here, that no evidence was ever obtained concerning the manner in which Thousandacres received his death-wound. He was shot through the open door, beyond all question, as he sat in his chair; and necessarily in the early part of the fray, for then only was a rifle discharged very near the house, or from a point that admitted of the ball's

hitting its victim. For myself, I believed from the first that Susquesus sacrificed the squatter to the manes of his friend Chainbearer; dealing out Indian justice, without hesitation or compunction. Still, I could not be certain of the fact; and the Onondago had either sufficient prudence or sufficient philosophy to keep his own secret. It is true that a remark or two did escape him, soon after the affair occurred, that tended to sustain my suspicions; but, on the whole, he was remarkably reserved on the subject—less from any apprehension of consequences, than from self-respect and pride of character. There was little to be apprehended, indeed, the previous murder of Chainbearer, and the unlawful nature of all the proceedings of the squatters, justifying a direct and sudden attack on the part of the posse.

Just as Malbone and myself discovered the condition of Thousandacres, this posse, with 'Squire Newcome at its head, began to collect round the house, which might now be termed our hospital. As the party was large, and necessarily a little tumultuous, I desired Frank to lead them off to some of the other buildings, as soon as a bed had been prepared for the squatter, who was placed in the same room with Chainbearer to die. No one, in the least acquainted with injuries of that nature, could entertain any hope for either; though a messenger was sent to the settlements for the individual who was called "doctor," and who was really fast acquiring many useful notions about his profession, by practicing on the human system. They say that "an ounce of experience is worth a pound of theory," and this disciple of Esculapius seemed to have set up in his art on this principle; having little or none of the last, while he was really obtaining a very respectable amount of the first, as he practised right and left, as the pugilist is most apt to hit in his rallies. Occasionally, however, he gave a knock-down blow.

As soon as the necessary arrangements were made in our hospital, I told Dus that we would leave her and Lowiny in attendance on the wounded, both of whom manifested weariness and a disposition to doze, while all the rest of the party would draw off, and take up their quarters for the

night in the adjacent buildings. Malbone was to remain as a sentinel, a little distance from the door, and I promised to join him in the course of an hour.

"Lowiny can attend to the wants of her father, while you will have the tenderest care of your uncle, I well know. A little drink occasionally is all that can alleviate their sufferings—"

"Let me come in," interrupted a hoarse female voice at the door, as a woman forced her way through the opposing arms of several of the posse. "I am Aaron's wife, and they tell me he is hurt. God himself has ordered that a woman should cleave unto her husband, and Thousandacres is mine; and he is the father of my children, if he has murdered, and been murdered in his turn."

There was something so commanding in the natural emotions of this woman, that the guard at the door gave way immediately, when Prudence entered the room. The first glance of the squatter's wife was at the bed of Chainbearer; but nothing there held her gaze riveted. That gaze only became fixed as her eyes fell on the large form of Thousandacres, as he lay extended on his death-bed. It is probable that this experienced matron, who had seen so many accidents in the course of a long life, and had sat by so many a bedside, understood the desperate nature of her husband's situation as soon as her eyes fell on the fallen countenance; for, turning to those near her, the first impulse was, to revenge the wrong which she conceived had been done to her and hers. I will acknowledge that I felt awed, and that a thrill passed through my frame as this rude and unnurtured female, roused by her impulses, demanded authoritatively,—

"Who has done this? Who has taken the breath from my man before the time set by the Lord? Who has dared to make my children fatherless and me a widow, agin law and right? I left my man seated on that hearth, heart-stricken and troubled at what had happened to another; and they tell me he has been murdered in his chair. The Lord will be on our side at last, and then we 'll see whom the law will favor, and whom the law will condemn!"

A movement and a groan on the part of Thousandacres would seem first to have apprised Prudence that her husband was not actually dead. Starting at this discovery, this tiger's mate and tiger's dam, if not tigress herself, ceased everything like appeal and complaint, and set herself about those duties which naturally suggested themselves to one of her experience, with the energy of a frontier woman—a woodsman's wife, and the mother of a large brood of woodsman's sons and daughters. She wiped the face of Thousandacres, wet his lips, shifted his pillow, such as it was, placed his limbs in postures she thought the easiest, and otherwise manifested a sort of desperate energy in her care. The whole time she was doing this, her tongue was muttering prayers and menaces, strangely blended together, and quite as strangely mixed up with epithets of endearment that were thrown away on her still insensible and least unconscious husband. She called him Aaron, and that too in a tone that sounded as if Thousandacres had a strong hold on her affections, and might at least have been kind and true to her.

I felt convinced that Dus had nothing to fear from Prudence, and I left the place as soon as the two nurses had everything arranged for their respective patients, and the house was quite free from the danger of intrusion. On quitting her who now occupied most of my thoughts, I ventured to whisper a request she would not forget the pledges given me in the forest, and asked her to summon me to the bedside of Chainbearer, should he rouse himself from the slumber that had come over him, and manifest a desire to converse. I feared he might renew the subject to which his mind had already once adverted since receiving his wound, and imbue his niece with some of his own set notions on that subject. Ursula was kindness itself. Her affliction had even softened her feelings towards me more than ever; and, so far as she was concerned, I certainly had no ground for uneasiness. In passing Frank, who stood on post some twenty yards from the door of the house, he said: "God bless you, Littlepage—fear nothing, I am too much in your own situation not to be warmly your

friend." I returned his good wishes and went my way, in one sense rejoicing.

The posse, as has been stated, were in possession of the different deserted habitations of the family of Thousand-acres. The night being cool, fires were blazing on all the hearths, and the place wore an air of cheerfulness that it had probably never before known. Most of the men had crowded into two of the dwellings, leaving a third for the convenience of the magistrate, Frank Malbone, and myself, whenever we might choose to repair to it. By the time I appeared, the posse had supped, using the milk and bread and other eatables of the squatters, *ad libitum*, and were disposing of themselves on the beds and on the floors to take a little rest after their long and rapid march. But in my own quarters I found 'Squire Newcome alone, unless the silent and motionless Onondago, who occupied a chair in a corner of the fireplace, could be called a companion. Jaap, too, in expectation of my arrival, was lounging near the door; and when I entered the house, he followed me in for orders.

It was easy for me, who knew of Newcome's relations with the squatters, to discover the signs of confusion in his countenance, as his eye first met mine. One who was not acquainted with the circumstances most probably would have detected nothing out of the common way. It will be remembered that the "'squire" had no positive knowledge that I was acquainted with his previous visit to the mill; and it will be easy to see that he must have felt an itching and uneasy desire to ascertain that fact. A great deal depended on that circumstance; nor was it long before I had a specimen of his art in sounding round the truth, with a view to relieve his mind.

"Who 'd 'a' thought of findin' Major Littlepage in the hands of the Philistines, in sich an out o' the way place as this!" exclaimed Mr. Newcome, as soon as our salutations had been exchanged. "I 've heern say there was squatters down hereabouts; but such things are so common that I never bethought me of givin' him a hint on the matter when I last saw the major."

Nothing could surpass the deferential manner of this person when he had an object to gain, it being quite common with him to use the third person in this way, when addressing a superior; a practice that has almost become obsolete in the English language, and which is seldom if ever used in America except by this particular class of men, who defer before your face, and endeavor to undermine when the back is turned. My humor was not to trifle with this fellow, though I did not know that it was exactly prudent, just then, to let him know that I had both seen and heard him in his former visit, and was fully aware of all his practices. It was not easy, however, to resist the opportunity given by his own remarks, to put him a little way on the tenter-hooks of conscience—that quality of the human mind being one of the keenest allies an assailant can possess in cases of this sort.

"I had supposed, Mr. Newcome, that you were generally charged with the care of the Mooseridge lands, as one of the conditions annexed to the Ravensnest agency," I somewhat dryly remarked.

"Sartain, sir; the colonel—or gin'ral, as he ought to be called now, I do s'pose—gave me the superintendence of both at the same time. But the major knows, I presume, that Mooseridge was not on sale?"

"No sir; it would seem to have been only on plunder. One would think that an agent, entrusted with the care of an estate, and who heard of squatters being in possession, and stripping the land of its trees, would feel it to be his duty at least to apprise the owners of the circumstance, that they might look to the case if he did not."

"The major has n't rightly understood me," put in the 'squire, in a manner that was particularly deprecatory; "I don't mean to say that I knowed, with anything like positiveness, that there was squatters hereabouts; but that rumors was stirrin' of some sich things. But squatters is sich common objects in new countries that a body scarce turns aside to look at them!"

"So it would seem, in your case at least, Mr. Newcome. This Thousandacres, however, they tell me, is a well-known

character, and has done little since his youth but lumber on the property of other people. I should suppose you must have met him in the course of five-and-twenty years' residence in this part of the world?"

"Lord bless the major! met Thousandacres? Why, I've met him a hundred times!" We all know the old man well enough; and many and many is the time I've met him at raisin's and trainin's, and town meetin's, and political meetin's, too. I've even seen him in court, though Thousandacres don't set much store by law, not half as much as he and every other man ought to do; for law is excellent, and society would be no better than a collection of wild beasts, as I often tell Miss Newcome, if it had n't law to straighten it out, and to teach the misguided and evil-disposed what 's right. I s'pose the major will coincide with that idee?"

"I have no particular objection to the sentiment, sir, but wish it was more general. As you have seen this person Thousandacres so often, perhaps you can tell me something of his character. My opportunities of knowing the man have been none of the best; for most of the time I was his prisoner he had me shut up in an out-building in which I believe he has usually kept his salt, and grain, and spare provisions."

"Not the old store-us!" exclaimed the magistrate, looking a little aghast, for the reader will doubtless recollect that the confidential dialogue between him and the squatter, on the subject of the lumber, had occurred so near that building as to be overheard by me. "How long has the major been in this clearin', I wonder?"

"Not a very great while in fact, though long enough to make it appear a week. I was put into the storehouse soon after my seizure, and have passed at least half my time there since."

"I want to know! Perhaps the major got in that hole as 'arly as yesterday morn?"

"Perhaps I did, sir. But, Mr. Newcome, on looking round at the quantity of lumber these men have made, and recollecting the distance they are from Albany, I am at a

loss to imagine how they could hope to get their ill-gotten gains to market without discovery. It would seem to me that their movements must be known, and that the active and honest agents of this part of the country would seize their rafts in the watercourses; thus making the very objects of the squatters' roguery the means of their punishment. Is it not extraordinary that theft, in a moral sense at least, can be systematically carried on, and that on so large a scale, with such entire impunity?"

"Wa-a-l—I s'pose the major knows how things turn in this world. Nobody likes to meddle."

"How, sir—not meddle! This is contrary to all my experience of the habits of the country, and all I have heard of it! Meddling, I have been given to understand, is the great vice of our immigrant population, in particular, who never think they have their just rights, unless they are privileged to talk about, and set in judgment on the affairs of all within twenty miles of them; making two thirds of their facts as they do so, in order to reconcile their theories with the wished-for results."

"Ah! I don't mean meddlin' in that sense, of which there is enough, as all must allow. But folks don't like to meddle with things that don't belong to them in such serious matters as this."

"I understand you—the man who will pass days in discussing his neighbor's private affairs, about which he absolutely knows nothing but what has been obtained from the least responsible and most vulgar sources, will stand by and see that neighbor robbed and say nothing, under the influence of a sentiment so delicate that it forbids his meddling with what don't belong to him!"

Lest the reader should think I was unduly severe upon 'Squire Newcome, let me appeal to his own experience, and inquire if he never knew, not only individuals but whole neighborhoods, which were solely addicted to prying into every man's affairs, and to inventing when facts did not exactly sustain theories; in a word, convulsing themselves with that with which they have no real concern, draw themselves up in dignified reserve, as the witnesses of

wrongs of all sorts that every honest man is bound to oppose? I will go further, and ask if a man does happen to step forth to vindicate the right, to assert truth, to defend the weak, and to punish the wrong-doer, if that man be not usually the one who meddles least in the more ordinary and minor transactions of life—the man who troubles his neighbors least, and has the least to say about their private affairs? Does it not happen that the very individual who will stand by and see his neighbor wronged, on account of his indisposition to meddle with that which does not belong to him, will occupy a large portion of his own time in discussing, throwing out hints, and otherwise commenting on the private affairs of that very neighbor?

Mr. Newcome was shrewd, and he understood me well enough, though he probably found it a relief to his apprehensions to see the conversation inclining toward these generalities, instead of sticking to the storehouse. Nevertheless, "boards" must have been uppermost in his conscience; and after a pause he made an invasion into the career of Thousandacres, by way of diverting me from pushing matters too directly.

"This old squatter was a desperate man, Major Littlepage," he answered, "and it may be fortinate for the country that he is done with. I hear the old fellow is killed, and that all the rest of the family has absconded."

"It is not quite so bad as that. Thousandacres is hurt, mortally perhaps, and all his sons have disappeared; but his wife and one of his daughters are still here, in attendance on the husband and father."

"Prudence is here, then!" exclaimed Mr. Newcome, a little indiscreetly as I thought.

"She is—but you seem to know the family well for a magistrate, 'squire, seeing their ordinary occupation—so well, as to call the woman by her name."

"Prudence, I think Thousandacres used to call his woman. Yes, the major is very right; we magistrates do get to know the neighborhood pretty gin'rally; what between summonses, and warrants, and bailings-out. But the major has n't yet said when he first fell into the hands of these folks?"

"I first entered this clearing yesterday morning, not a long time after the sun rose, since which time, sir, I have been detained here, either by force or by circumstances."

A long pause succeeded this announcement. The 'squire fidgeted, and seemed uncertain how to act; for, while my announcement must have given rise, in his mind, to the strong probability of my knowing of his connection with the squatters, it did not absolutely say as much. I could see that he was debating with himself on the expediency of coming out with some tale invented for the occasion, and I turned toward the Indian and the negro, both of whom I knew to be thoroughly honest—after the Indian and the negro fashions—in order to say a friendly word to each in turn.

Susquesus was in one of his quiescent moods, and had lighted a pipe, which he was calmly smoking. No one, to look at him, would suppose that he had so lately been engaged in a scene like that through which he had actually gone; but, rather, that he was some thoughtful philosopher, who habitually passed his time in reflection and study.

As this was one of the occasions on which the Onondago came nearest to admitting his own agency in procuring the death of the squatter, I shall relate the little that passed between us.

"Good evening, Sureflint," I commenced, extending a hand, which the other courteously took in compliance with our customs. "I am glad to see you at large, and no longer a prisoner in that storehouse."

"Store-us poor jail. Jaap snap off bolt like pipe-stem. Won'er T'ousandacres did n't t'ink of d'at."

"Thousandacres has had too much to think of this evening, to remember such a trifle. He has now to think of his end."

The Onondago was clearing the bowl of his pipe of its superfluous ashes as I said this, and he deliberately effected his purpose ere he answered—

"Sartain—s'pose he kill dis time."

"I fear his hurt is mortal, and greatly regret that it has happened. The blood of our tried friend, Chainbearer, was enough to be shed in so miserable an affair as this."

"Yes, 'fair pretty mis'rable; t'ink so, too. If squatter shoot surveyor, must t'ink surveyor's fri'nd will shoot squatter."

"That may be Indian law, Sureflint, but it is not the law of the pale-face, in the time of peace and quiet."

Susquesus continued to smoke, making no answer.

"It was a very wicked thing to murder Chainbearer, and Thousandacres should have been handed over to the magistrates, for punishment, if he had a hand in it; not shot, like a dog."

The Onondago drew his pipe from his mouth, looked round toward the 'squire, who had gone to the door in order to breathe the fresh air; then, turning his eyes most significantly on me, he answered,—

"Who magistrate go to, eh? What use good law wit' poor magistrate? Better have redskin law, and warrior be his own magistrate—own gallows, too."

The pipe was replaced, and Sureflint appeared to be satisfied with what had passed; for he turned away, and seemed to be lost again, in his own reflections.

After all, the strong native intellect of this barbarian had let him into one of the greatest secrets connected with our social ills. Good laws, badly administered, are no better than an absence of all law, since they only encourage evil-doers by the protection they afford through the power conferred on improper agents. Those who have studied the defects of the American system, with a view to ascertain truth, say that the want of a great moving power to set justice in motion lies at the root of its feebleness. According to theory, the public virtue is to constitute this power; but public virtue is never one half as active as private vice. Crime is only to be put down by the strong hand, and that hand must belong to the public in truth, not in name only; whereas, the individual wronged is fast getting to be the only moving power, and in very many cases local parties are formed, and the rogue goes to the bar sustained by an authority that has quite as much practical control as the law itself. Juries and grand juries are no longer to be relied on, and the bench is slowly, but steadily, losing its influ-

ence. When the day shall come—as come it must, if present tendencies continue—that verdicts are rendered directly in the teeth of law and evidence, and jurors fancy themselves legislators, then may the just man fancy himself approaching truly evil times, and the patriot begin to despair. It will be the commencement of the rogue's paradise! Nothing is easier, I am willing to admit, than to over-govern men; but it ought not to be forgotten, that the political vice that comes next in the scale of facility, is to govern them too little.

Jaap, or Jaaf, had been humbly waiting for his turn to be noticed. There existed perfect confidence, as between him and myself, but there were also bounds, in the way of respect, that the slave never presumed to pass, without direct encouragement from the master. Had I not seen fit to speak to the black that night, he would not have commenced a conversation, which, begun by me, he entered into with the utmost frankness and freedom from restraint.

"You seem to have managed your part of this affair, Jaap," I said, "with discretion and spirit. I have every reason to be satisfied with you; more especially for liberating the Indian, and for the manner in which you guided the posse down into the clearing, from the woods."

"Yes, sah; s'pose you would t'ink dat was pretty well. As for Sus, t'ought it best to let him out, for he be won'erful sartain wid he rifle. We should do much better, Massa Mordy, but 'e 'squire so werry backward about lettin, 'e men shoot 'em 'ere squatter! Gosh! Massa Mordy, if he only say 'fire' when I want him, I don't t'ink so much as half a one get off."

"It is best as it is, Jaap. We are at peace, and in the bosom of our country; and bloodshed is to be avoided."

"Yes, sah; but Chainbearer! If 'ey don't like bloodshed, why 'ey shoot him, sah?"

"There is a feeling of justice in what you say, Jaap, but the community cannot get on in anything like safety unless we let the law rule. Our business was to take those squatters, and to hand them over to the law."

"Werry true, sah. Nobody can't deny dat, Massa Mordy,

but he nodder seize nor shot, now! Sartain, it best to do one or t'odder with sich rascal. Well, I t'ink dat Tobit, as dey calls him, will remember Jaap Satanstoe long as he live. Dat a good t'ing, any way!"

"Good!" exclaimed the Onondago, with energy.

I saw it was useless, then, to discuss abstract principles with men so purely practical as my two companions, and I left the house to reconnoitre, ere I returned to our hospital for the night. The negro followed me, and I questioned him as to the manner of the attack, and the direction of the retreat of the squatters, in order to ascertain what danger there might be during the hours of darkness. Jaap gave me to understand that the men of Thousandacres' family had retired by the way of the stream, profiting by the declivity to place themselves under cover as soon as possible. As respects the women and children, they must have got into the woods at some other point, and it was probable the whole had sought some place of retreat that would naturally have been previously appointed by those who knew that they lived in the constant danger of requiring one. Jaap was very certain we should see no more of the men, and in that he was perfectly right. No more was ever seen of any one of them all in that part of the country, though rumors reached us, in the course of time, from some of the more western countries, that Tobit had been seen there, a cripple, as I have already stated, but maintaining his old character for lawlessness and disregard of the rights of others.

I next returned to Frank Malbone, who still stood on post at no great distance from the door, through which we could both see the form and features of his beautiful and beloved sister. Dus sat by her uncle's bedside, while Prudence had stationed herself by that of her husband. Frank and I advanced near the door, and looked in upon the solemn and singular sight that room afforded. It was indeed a strange and sad spectacle, to see those two aged men, each with his thin locks whitened by seventy years, drawing near their ends, the victims of lawless violence; for, while the death of Thousandacres was enveloped in a certain mystery, and might by some eyes be viewed as merited and legal, there

could be no doubt that it was a direct consequence of the previous murder of Chainbearer. It is in this way that wrong extends and sometimes perpetuates its influence, proving the necessity of taking time by the forelock, and resorting to prevention in the earliest stages of the evil, instead of cure.

There lay the two victims of the false principles that the physical condition of the country, connected with its passive endurance of encroachments on the right, had gradually permitted to grow up among us. Squatting was a consequence of the thinness of the population and of the abundance of land, the two very circumstances that rendered it the less justifiable in a moral point of view; but which, by rendering the one side careless of its rights, and the other proportionably encroaching, had gradually led, not only to this violation of law, but to the adoption of notions that are adverse to the supremacy of law in any case. It is this gradual undermining of just opinions that forms the imminent danger of our social system; a spurious philanthropy on the subject of punishments, false notions on that of personal rights, and the substitution of numbers for principles, bidding fair to produce much the most important revolution that has ever yet taken place on the American continent. The lover of real liberty, under such circumstances, should never forget that the road to despotism lies along the borders of the slough of licentiousness, even when it escapes wallowing in its depths.

When Malbone and myself drew back from gazing on the scene within the house, he related to me in detail all that was connected with his own proceedings. The reader knows that it was by means of a meeting in the forest, between the Indian and the negro, that my friends first became acquainted with my arrest, and the probable danger in which I was placed. Chainbearer, Dus, and Jaap instantly repaired to the clearing of Thousandacres; while Malbone hastened on to Ravensnest, in pursuit of legal aid, and of a force to render my rescue certain. Meditating on all the facts of the case, and entertaining most probably an exaggerated notion of the malignant character of Thousandacres, by the time he

reached the 'Nest my new friend was in a most feverish state of excitement. His first act was to write a brief statement of the facts to my father, and to dispatch his letter by a special messenger, with orders to him to push on for Fishkill, all the family being there at the time, on a visit to the Kettletases; proceeding by land or by water, as the wind might favor. I was startled at this information, foreseeing at once that it would bring not only the general himself, but my dear mother and Kate, with Tom Bayard quite likely in her train, post-haste to Ravensnest. It might even cause my excellent old grandmother to venture so far from home; for my last letters had apprised me that they were all on the point of visiting my sister Anneke, which was the way Frank had learned where the family was to be found.

As Malbone's messenger had left the 'Nest early the preceding night, and the wind had been all day fresh at north, it came quite within the bounds of possibility that he might be at Fishkill at the very moment I was listening to the history of his message. The distance was about a hundred and forty miles, and nearly one hundred of it could be made by water. Such a messenger would care but little for the accommodations of his craft; and, on the supposition that he reached Albany that morning, and found a sloop ready to profit by the breeze, as would be likely to occur, it would be quite in rule to reach the landing at Fishkill in the course of the evening, aided by the little gale that had been blowing. I knew General Littlepage too well, to doubt either his affection or his promptitude. Albany could be reached in a day by land, and Ravensnest in another. I made my account, therefore, to see a part if not all of the family at the 'Nest, as soon as I should reach it myself; an event not likely to occur, however, for some little time, on account of the condition of Chainbearer.

I shall not deny that this new state of things, with the expectations connected with it, gave me sufficient food for reflection. I could not and did not blame Frank Malbone for what he had done, since it was natural and proper. Notwithstanding, it would precipitate matters as regarded my relations to Dus a little faster than I could have wished. I

desired time to sound my family on the important subject of my marriage—to let the three or four letters I had already written, and in which she had been mentioned in a marked manner, produce their effect; and I counted largely on the support I was to receive through the friendship and representations of Miss Bayard. I felt certain that deep disappointment on the subject of Pris. would be felt by the whole family; and it was my wish not to introduce Ursula to their acquaintance until time had a little lessened its feeling. But things must now take their course; and my determination was settled to deal as sincerely and simply as possible with my parents on the subject. I knew their deep affection for me, and relied strongly on that natural support.

I had half an hour's conversation with Dus while walking in front of the hospital that night, Frank taking his sister's place by the side of Chainbearer's bed. Then it was that I again spoke of my hopes, and explained the probabilities of our seeing all of my immediate family so shortly at Ravensnest. My arm was round the waist of the dear girl as I communicated these facts; and I felt her tremble, as if she dreaded the trial she was to undergo.

"This is very sudden and unexpected, Mordaunt," Dus remarked, after she had had a little time to recover her recollection; "and I have so much reason to fear the judgment of your respectable parents—of your charming sister, of whom I have heard so often through Priscilla Bayard—and indeed of all who have lived, as they have done, amid the elegancies of a refined state of society; I, Dus Malbone—a chainbearer's niece, and a chainbearer myself!"

"You have never borne any chain, love, that is as lasting or as strong as that which you have entwined around my heart, and which will forever bind me to you, let the rest of the world regard us both as it may. But you can have nothing to fear from any, and least of all from my friends. My father is not worldly-minded; and as for my dear, dear mother, Anneke Mordaunt, as the general even now often affectionately calls her, as if the name itself reminded him of the days of her maiden loveliness and pride—as for that beloved mother, Ursula, I do firmly believe that,

when she comes to know you, she will even prefer you to her son."

"That is a picture of your blinded partiality, Mordaunt," answered the gratified girl, for gratified I could see she was; "and must not be too fondly relied on. But this is no time to talk of our own future happiness, when the eternal happiness or misery of those two aged men is suspended, as it might be, by a thread. I have read my prayers once already with my dear uncle; and that strange woman, in whom there is so much of her sex mingled with a species of ferocity like that of a she-bear, has muttered a hope that her own 'dying man,' as she calls him, is not to be forgotten. I have promised he should not be, and it is time to attend to that duty next."

What a scene followed! Dus placed the light on a chest near the bed of Thousandacres, and with the prayer-book in her hand, she knelt beside it. Prudence stationed herself in such a posture that her head was buried in one of her own garments, that was suspended from a peg; and there she stood, while the melodious voice of Ursula Malbone poured out the petitions contained in the offices for the dying, in humble but fervent piety. I say stood, for neither Prudence nor Lowiny knelt. The captious temper of self-righteousness which had led their ancestors to reject kneeling at prayers as the act of formalists, had descended to them; and there they stood, praying doubtless in their hearts, but ungracious formalists themselves in their zeal against forms. Frank and I knelt in the door-way; and I can truly affirm that never did prayers sound so sweetly in my ears, as those which then issued from the lips of Ursula Malbone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Thence cum we to the horrour and the hel,
The large great kyngdomes, and the dreadful raygne
Of Pluto in his trone where he dyd dwell,
The wyde waste places, and the hugye playne:
The waylings, shrykes, and sundry sortes of payne,
The syghes, and sobbes, and diep and deadly groane,
Earth, ayer, and all resounding playnt and moane."

SACKVILLE.

IN this manner did that memorable night wear away. The two wounded men slumbered much of the time; nor did their wants extend beyond occasional draughts of water, to cool their feverish mouths, or the wetting of lips. I prevailed on Dus to lie down on the bed of Lowiny, and try to get a little rest; and I had the pleasure to hear her say that she had slept sweetly for two or three hours, after the turn of the night. Frank and I caught naps also, after the fashion of soldiers, and Lowiny slept in her chair or leaning on her father's bed. As for Prudence, I do not think her watchfulness was lessened for a single instant. There she sat the livelong night; silent, tearless, moody, and heart-stricken by the great and sudden calamity that had befallen her race, but vigilant and attentive to the least movement in the huge frame of her wounded partner. No complaint escaped her; scarcely once did she turn to look at what was going on around her, nor in any manner did she heed aught but her husband. To him she seemed to be unerringly true; and whatever she may, and must have thought of his natural sternness, and occasional fits of severity toward herself, all now seemed to be forgotten.

At length light returned, after hours of darkness that seemed to me to be protracted to an unusual length. Then

it was when Jaap and the Indian were ready to take our places on the watch, that Frank and I went to one of the huts and lay down for two or three hours; and that was the time when Dus got her sweetest and most refreshing sleep. Lowiny prepared our morning's meal for us; which we three, that is, Dus, Frank and myself, took together in the best way we could, in the dwelling of Tobit. As for 'Squire Newcome, he left the clearing in the course of the night, or very early in the morning, doubtless exceedingly uneasy in his conscience, but still uncertain whether his connection with the squatters was or was not known to me; the excuse for this movement being the probable necessity of summoning a jury; Mr. Jason Newcome filling in his own person, or by deputy, the several offices and functions of justice of the peace, one of the coroners of the county, supervisor of the township of Ravensnest, merchant, shopkeeper, miller, lumber-dealer, husbandman, and innkeeper; to say nothing of the fact that he wrote all the wills of the neighborhood; was a standing arbitrator when disputes were "left out to men"; was a leading politician, a patriot by trade, and a remarkable and steady advocate of the rights of the people, even to minutiæ. Those who know mankind will not be surprised, after this enumeration of his pursuits and professions, to hear it added that he was a remarkable rogue in the bargain.

There are two things I have lived long enough to receive as truths established by my own experience, and they are these: I never knew a man who made large professions of a love for the people, and of his wish to serve them on all occasions, whose aim was not to deceive them to his own advantage; and the other is, that I never knew a man who was compelled to come much in contact with the people, and who at the same time was personally popular, who had anything in him, at the bottom. But it is time to quit Jason Newcome and his defects of character, in order to attend to the interesting scene that awaited us in the dwelling of Thousandacres, and to which we were now summoned by Jaap.

As the day advanced, both the Chainbearer and the

squatter became aroused from the languor that had succeeded the receiving of their respective hurts, and more or less alive to what was passing around them. Life was ebbing fast in both, yet each seemed, just at that moment, to turn his thoughts backward on the world, in order, as it might be, to take a last look at those scenes in which he had now been an actor for the long period of threescore and ten years.

"Uncle Chainbearer is much revived, just now," said Dus, meeting Frank and myself at the door, "and he has asked for you both; more especially for Mordaunt, whose name he has mentioned three several times within the last five minutes. 'Send for Mordaunt, my child,' he has said to me, 'for I wish to speak with him before I quit you.' I am fearful he has inward admonitions of his approaching end."

"That is possible, dearest Ursula; for men can hardly lose their hold of life without being aware of the approaches of death. I will go at once to his bedside, that he may know I am here. It is best to let his own feelings decide whether he is able or not to converse."

The sound of Chainbearer's voice, speaking in a low but distinct tone, caught our ears as we approached him, and we all stopped to listen.

"I say, T'ousantacres," repeated Andries, on a key a little louder than before, "if you hear me, olt man, ant can answer, I wish you to let me know it. You ant I pe apout to start on a fery long journey, ant it ist unreasonaple, as well as wicket, to set out wit' pad feelin's at t'e heart. If you hat a niece, now, like Dus t'ere, to tell you t'ese matters, olt Aaron, it might pe petter for your soul in t'e worlt into which we are poth apout to enter."

"He knows it—I 'm sure he knows it, and feels it, too," muttered Prudence, rocking her body as before. "He has had pious forefathers, and cannot have fallen so far away from grace, as to forget death and eternity."

"Look you, Prutence, Aaron nefer coult fall away from what he nefer wast fastenet to. As for pious forefat'ers, t'ey may do to talk apout in Fourt' of July orations, put t'ey are of no great account in cleansin' a man from his

sins. I s'pose t'em pious forefat'ers of which you speak was t'e people t'at first steppet on t'e rock town at Plymout' ; put, let me telt you, Prutence, hat t'ere peen twice as many of t'em, and hat t'ey all peen twice as goot as you poast of t'eir hafin' peen, it wilt do no goot to your man, unless he wilt repent, and pe sorry for all t'e unlawful ant wicket t'ings he hast tone in t'is worlt, and his treatment of pountaries in jin'ral, ant of ot'er men's lants in partic'lar. Pious ancestors may be pleasant to haf, put goot pehavior ist far petter as t'e last hour approaches."

"Answer him, Aaron," the wife rejoined ; "answer him, my man, in order that we may all on us know the frame of mind in which you take your departure. Chainbearer is a kind-hearted man at the bottom, and has never willfully done us any harm."

For the first time since Andries received his wound, I now heard the voice of Thousandacres. Previously to that moment, the squatter, whether hurt or not, had sat in moody silence, and I had supposed after he was wounded that he was unable to use his tongue. To my surprise, however, he now spoke with a depth and strength of voice that at first misled me, by inducing me to think that the injury he had received could not be fatal.

"If there was n't no chainbearers," growled Thousandacres, "there would n't be no lines, or metes and bounds, as they call 'em ; and where there 's no metes and bounds, there can be no right but possession. If 't was n't for your writin' titles, I should n't be lyin' here, breathin' my last."

"Forgive it all, my man ; forgive it all, as behooves a good Christian," Prudence returned to this characteristic glance at the past, in which the squatter had so clearly overlooked all his own delinquencies, and was anxious to impute consequences altogether to others. "It is the law of God to forgive your enemies, Aaron, and I want you to forgive Chainbearer, and not go to the world of spirits with gall in your heart."

"'T would pe much petter, Prutence, if T'ousantacres woult pray to Got to forgif himself," put in Chainbearer. "I am fery willin', ant happy to haf t'e forgifness of efery

man, and it ist not unlikely t'at I may haf tone somet'ing, or sait somet'ing t'at hast peen hart to t'e feelin's of your huspant; for we are rough, and plain speakin', and plain actin' enough, in t'e woots; so I'm willin' to haf even T'ousantacres' forgifness, I say, and wilt accept it wit' pleasure if he wilt offer it, and take mine in exchange."

A deep groan struggled out of the broad, cavern-like chest of the squatter. I took it as an admission that he was the murderer of Andries.

"Yes," resumed Chainbearer, "Dus hast mate me see—"

"Uncle!" exclaimed Ursula, who was intently listening and who now spoke because unable to restrain the impulse.

"Yes, yes, gal, it hast peen all your own toin's. Pefore ast you come pack from school, ast we come into t'e woots, all alone like, you haf nefer forgotten to teach an olt, forgetful man his tuty—"

"Oh! uncle Chainbearer, it is not I, but God in his mercy who has enlightened your understanding and touched your heart."

"Yes, tarlin'; yes, Dus, my tear, I comprehent t'at too; but Got in his mercy sent an angel to pe his minister on 'art' wit' a poor ignorant Tutchman, who hast not t'e l'arnin' ant t'e grace he might ant ought to have hat, wit'out your ait, and so hast t'e happy change come apout. No, no, T'ousantacres, I wilt not tespise even your forgifness, little as you may haf to forgif; for it lightens a man's heart of heafy loats, when his time is short, to know he leafs no enemies pehind him. T'ey say it ist pest to haf t'e goot wishes of a tog, and how much petter ist it to haf t'e goot wishes of one who hast a soul t'at only wants purifyin', to twell in t'e Almighty's presence t'roughout eternity!"

"I hope and believe," again growled Thousandacres, "that in the world we're goin' to, there'll be no law, and no attorneys."

"In t'at t'en, Aaron, you pe greatly mistaken. T'at lant is all law, and justice, and right; t'ough, Got forgif me if I do any man an injury; put to pe frank wit' you,

as pecomes two mortals so near t'eir ents, I do not pelieve, myself, t'at t'ere wilt pe a great many attorneys to trouple t'em t'at are receivet into t'e courts of t'e Almighty, himself. T'eir practices on 'arth does not suit t'em for practice in heafen."

"If you'd always held them rational notions, Chainbearer, no harm might have come to you, and my life and your'n been spared. But this is a state of being in which short-sightedness prevails ag'in the best calkerlations. I never felt more sure of gittin' lumber to market than I felt three days ago of gittin' this, that's in the creek, safe to Albany; and now, you see how it is! the b'ys are disparsed, and may never see this spot ag'in; the gals are in the woods, runnin' with the deer of the forest; the lumber has fallen into the hands of the law; and that, too, by the aid of a man that was bound in honesty to protect me, and I'm dyin' here!"

"Think no more of the lumber, my man, think no more of the lumber," said Prudence, earnestly; "time is desp'rate short at the best, and yours is shorter than common, even for a man of seventy, while etarnity has no eend. Forgit the boards, and forgit the b'ys, and forgit the gals, forgit 'arth and all it holds!"

"You would n't have me forgit you, Prudence," interrupted Thousandacres, "that's been my wife, now, forty long years, and whom I tuck when she was young and comely, and that's borne me so many children, and has always been a faithful and hard-working woman—you would n't have me forget you!"

This singular appeal, coming as it did from such a being, and almost in his agony, sounded strangely and solemnly, amid the wild and semi-savage appliances of a scene I can never forget. The effect on Ursula was still more apparent; she left the bedside of her uncle, and, with strong womanly sympathy manifested in her countenance, approached that of this aged couple, now about to be separated for a short time, at least, where she stood gazing wistfully at the very man who was probably that uncle's murderer, as if she could gladly administer to his moral

ailings. Even Chainbearer attempted to raise his head, and looked with interest toward the other group. No one spoke, however, for all felt that the solemn recollections and forebodings of a pair so situated were too sacred for interruption. The discourse went on, without any hiatus, between them.

"Not I, not I, Aaron, my man," answered Prudence, with strong emotions struggling in her voice; "there can be no law or call for that. We are one flesh, and what God has j'ined, God will not keep asunder long. I cannot tarry long behind you, my man, and when we meet together ag'in, I hope 't will be where no boards, or trees, or acres can ever make more trouble for us!"

"I 've been hardly treated about that lumber, a'ter all," muttered the squatter, who was now apparently more aroused to consciousness than he had been, and who could not but keep harping on what had been the one great business of his life, even as that life was crumbling beneath his feet; "hardly dealt by, do I consider myself, about that lumber, Prudence. Make the most of the Littlepage rights, it was only trees that they could any way claim, in reason; while the b'ys and I, as you well know, have convarted them trees into as pretty and noble a lot of han'some boards and planks, as man ever rafted to market!"

"It 's convarsion of another natur' that you want now, Aaron, my man; another sort of convarsion is the thing needful. We must all be convarted once in our lives; at least all such as be the children of Puritan parents and a godly ancestry; and it must be owned, takin' into account our years, and the importance of example in sich a family as our'n, that you and I have put it off long enough. Come it must, or suthin' worse; and time and etarnity in your case, Aaron, is pretty much the same thing."

"I should die easier in mind, Prudence, if Chainbearer would only admit that the man who chops and hauls and saws and rafts a tree, does get some sort of a right, nat'ral or legal, to the lumber."

"I 'm sorry, T'ousantacres," put in Andries, "t'at you feel any such atmission from me necessary to you at t'is

awful moment, since I nefer can make it ast an honest man. You hat petter listen to your wife, and get confarted if you can, ant as soon ast you can. You ant I haf put a few hours to lif; I am an olt soltier, T'ousantacres, ant haf seen more t'an t'ree t'ousant men shot town in my own ranks, to say nut'in' of t'e ranks of t'e enemy; ant wit' so much exper'ence a man comes to know a little apout wounts ant t'eir tarminations. I gif it ast my chugment, t'erefore, t'at neither of us can haf t'e smallest hope to lif t'rough t'e next night. So get t'at confarsion as hastily ant ast well ast you can, for t'ere ist little time to lose, ant you a squatter! T'is ist t'e moment of all ot'ers, T'ousantacres, to proofe t'e true falue of professions, and trates, ant callin's, as well ast of t'e manner in which t'eir tuties haf peen fulfillet. It may pe more honorable ant more profitable to pe a calculating surfeyor, ant to unterstant arit'metic, and to pe talket of in t'e worlt for work tone on a large scale; put efen his excellency himself, when he comes to t'e last moments, may pe glat t'at t'e temptations of such l'arnin', ant his pein' so t'oroughly an honest man, toes not make him enfy t'e state of a poor chainpearer; who, if he tit n't know much, ant coult n't do much, at least measuret t'e lant wit' fitelity, and tid his work ast well ast he knew how. Yes, yes, olt Aaron; get confartet, I tell you; ant shoult Prutence not know enough of religion ant her piple, ant of prayin' to Got to haf marcy on your soul, t'ere ist Dus Malpone, my niece, who understants, ant what ist far petter, who feels t'ese matters quite as well as most tominies, ant petter t'an some lazy ant selfish ones t'at I know, who treat t'eir flocks as if t'e Lort meant t'ey was to pe shearet only, ant who wast too lazy to do much more t'an to keep cryin' out—not in t'e worts of t'e inspiret writer, 'Watchman, what of t'e night? watchman, what of t'e night?'—put, 'My pelovet, ant most Christian, ant gotly-mintet people, pay, pay, pay!' Yes, t'ere ist too much of such afarice ant selfishness in t'e worlt, ant it toes harm to t'e cause of t'e Safiour; put trut' is so clear ant peautiful an opject, my poor Aaron, t'at efen lies, ant fice, ant all manner of wicketnesses cannot long sully it. Take my atvice, ant

talk to Dus; ant t'ough you wilt toubtless continue to grow worse in poty, you wilt grow petter in spirit."

Thousandacres turned his grim visage round, and gazed intently and wistfully toward Ursula. I saw the struggle that was going on within, through the clear mirror of the sweet, ingenuous face of my beloved, and I saw the propriety of retiring. Frank Malbone understood my look, and we left the house together, closing the door behind us.

Two, to me, long and anxious hours succeeded, during most of which time my companion and myself walked about the clearing, questioning the men who composed the posse, and hearing their reports. These men were in earnest in what they were doing; for a respect for law is a distinguishing trait in the American character, and perhaps more so in New England, whence most of these people came, than in any other part of the country; the rascality of 'Squire Newcome to the contrary, notwithstanding. Some observers pretend that this respect for law is gradually decreasing among us, and that in its place is sensibly growing up a disposition to substitute the opinions, wishes, and interests of local majorities, making the country subject to men instead of principles. The last are eternal and immutable; and coming of God, men, however unanimous in sentiment, have no more right to attempt to change them, than to blaspheme his holy name. All that the most exalted and largest political liberty can ever beneficially effect is to apply these principles to the good of the human race, in the management of their daily affairs; but when they attempt to substitute for these pure and just rules of right, laws conceived in selfishness and excuted by the power of numbers they merely exhibit tyranny in its popular form, instead of in its old aspect of kingly or aristocratic abuses. It is a fatal mistake to fancy that freedom is gained by the mere achievement of a right in the people to govern, unless the manner in which that right is to be both understood and practised is closely incorporated with all the popular notions of what has been obtained. That right to govern means no more than the right of the people to avail themselves of the power thus acquired to apply the great principles of jus-

tice to their own benefit, and from the possession of which they had hitherto been excluded. It confers no power to do that which is inherently wrong, under any pretense whatever; nor would anything have been gained, had America, as soon as she relieved herself from a sway, that diverted so many of her energies to the increase of the wealth and influence of a distant people, gone to work to frame a new polity which should inflict similar wrongs within her own bosom.

My old acquaintance, the hearty Rhode Islander, was one of the posse; and I had a short conversation with him, while thus kept out of the house, which may serve to let the reader somewhat into the secret of the state of things at the clearing. We met near the mill, when my acquaintance, whose name was Hosmer, commenced as follows:

"A good day to you, major, and a hearty welcome to the open air!" cried the sturdy yeoman, frankly but respectfully offering his hand. "You fell into a pit here, or into a den among thieves; and its downright providential you e'er saw and breathed the clear air ag'in! Wa-a-l, I 've been trailin' a little this mornin', along with the Injin; and no hound has a more sartain scent than he has. We went into the hollow along the creek; and a desp'rate sight of boards them varmints have got into the water, I can tell you! If the lot 's worth forty pounds York, it must be worth every shilling of five hundred. They 'd 'a' made their fortin's, every blackguard among 'em. I don't know but I 'd fit myself to save so many boards, and sich beautiful boards, wrongfully or rightfully lumbered!"

Here the hearty old fellow stopped to laugh, which he did exactly in the full-mouthed, contented way in which he spoke and did everything else. I profited by the occasion to put in a word in reply.

"You are too honest a man, major, to think of ever making your boards out of another man's trees," I answered. "These people have lived by dishonest practices all their lives, and any one can see what it has come to."

"Yes, I hope I am, 'Squire Littlepage—I do hope I am. Hard work and I an't nohow afeard of each other; and so long as a man can work, and will work, Satan don't get a full grip on him. But, as I was sayin', the Trackless struck the trail down the creek, though it was along a somewhat beaten path; but the Injin would make no more of findin' it in a highway, than you and I would of findin' our places in the Bible on Sabba' day, where we had left off the Sabba' day that was gone. I always mark mine with a string the old woman braided for me on purpose, and a right-down good method it is; for, while you're s'archin' for your specs with one hand, nothin' is easier than to open the Bible with t'other. Them's handy things to have, major; and, when you marry some great lady down at York, sich a one as your own mother was, for I know'd her and honored her, as we all did here-away—but when you get married, ask your wife to braid a string for you, to find the place in the Bible with, and all will go right, take an old man's word for it."

"I thank you, friend, and will remember the advice, even though I might happen to marry a lady in this part of the world, and not down in York."

"This part of the world? No, we've got nobody our way, that's good enough for you. Let me see; Newcome has a da'ghter that's old enough, but she's desp'rate humbly (*anglice*, homely—the people of New England reserve 'ugly' for moral qualities) and would n't suit, no how. I don't think the Littlepages would overmuch like being warp and fillin' with the Newcomes."

"No! My father was an old friend—or an old acquaintance at least, of Mr. Newcome's, and must know and appreciate his merits."

"Yes, yes; I 'll warrant ye the gin'ral knows him. Wa-a-l! Human natur' is human natur'; and I do s'pose, if truth must be spoken, none on us be half as good as we ought to be. We read about faithful stewards in the good book, and about onfaithful ones too, 'squire"—here the old yeoman stopped to indulge in one of his hearty laughs, rendering it manifest he felt the full application of his

words. "Wa-a-l, all must allow the Bible 's a good book. I never open it, without l'arnin' suthin', and what I l'arn, I strive not to forgit. But there 's a messenger for you, major, from Thousandacres' hut, and I fancy it will turn out that he or Chainbearer is drawing near his eend."

Lowiny was coming to summon us to the house, sure enough, and I took my leave of my brother major for the moment. It was plain to me that this honest-minded yeoman, a good specimen of his class, saw through Newcome and his tricks, and was not unwilling to advert to them. Nevertheless, this man had a fault, and one very characteristic of his "order." He could not speak directly, but would hint round a subject, instead of coming out at once, and telling what he had to say; beating the bush to start his game, when he might have put it up at once, by going in at it directly. Before we parted, he gave me to understand that Susquesus and my fellow, Jaap, had gone on in pursuit of the retreating squatters, intending to follow their trail several miles, in order to make sure that Tobit and his gang were not hanging around the clearing to watch their property, ready to strike a blow when it might be least expected.

Dus met me at the door of the cabin, tearful and sad, but with such a holy calm reigning in her generally brilliant countenance, as denoted the nature of the solemn business in which she had just been engaged. She extended both hands to meet mine, and whispered, "Uncle Chainbearer is anxious to speak to us—on the subject of our engagement, I think it is." A tremor passed through the frame of Ursula, but she made an effort, smiled sadly, and continued: "Hear him patiently, dear Mordaunt, and remember that he is my father, in one sense, and as fully entitled to my obedience and respect as if I were really his daughter."

As I entered the room, I could see that Dus had been at prayer. Prudence looked comforted, but Thousandacres himself had a wild and uncertain expression of countenance, as if doubts had begun to beset him, at the very moment when they must have been the most tormenting. I observed that his anxious eye followed the form of Dus, and

that he gazed on her as one would be apt to regard the being who had just been the instrument of awakening within him the consciousness of his critical state. But my attention was soon drawn to the other bed.

"Come near me, Mortaunt, lat; ant come hit'er, Dus, my tearest ta'ghter ant niece. I haf a few worts of importance to say to you before I go, ant if t'ey be not sait now, t'ey nefer may be sait at all. It 's always pest to 'take time py t'e forelock,' t'ey say; ant surely I cannot pe callet in haste to speak, when not only one foot, put pot' feet and haf my poty in t'e pargain, may well pe sait to pe in t'e grave. Now listen to an olt man's atfice, and do not stop my worts until all haf been spoken, for I grow weak fast, ant haf not strength enough to t'row away any of it in argument.

"Mortaunt hast sait ast much in my hearin' ast to admit t'at he lofes ant atmires my gal, ant t'at he wishes, ant hopes, ant expects to make her his wife. On t'e ot'er hant, Ursula, or Dus, my niece, confesses ant acknowledges t'at she lofes, ant esteems, ant hast a strong regart for Mortaunt, and ist willin' to pecome his wife. All t'is is nat'ral, ant t'ere wast a time when it woult haf made me ast happy ast t'e tay ist long to hear as much sait py t'e one or t'e ot'er of t'e parties. You know, my chiltren, t'at my affection for you is equal, and t'at I consiter you, in all respects put t'at of worltly contition, to be as well suitet to become man ant wife ast any young couple in America. Put tuty is tuty, ant it must pe tischarget. General Littlepage wast my olt colonel; ant an honest ant an honoraple man himself, he hast efery right to expect t'at efery one of his former captains, in partic'lar, woult do unto him as t'ey woult haf him to do unto t'em. Now, t'ough heafen ist heafen, t'is worlt must be regartet as t'is worlt, ant t'e rules for its gofernment are to pe respectet in t'eir place. T'e Malpones pe a respectaple family, I know; ant t'ough Dus's own fat'er wast a little wilt, ant t'oughtless, ant extrafagant—"

"Uncle Chainbearer!"

"True, gal, true; he wast your fat'er, ant t'e chilt shoult respect its parent. I atmit t'at, ant wilt say no more t'an ist apsolutely necessary; pesites, if Malpone hat his pat

qualities, he hat his goot. A hantsomer man coult not be fount, far ant near, ast my poor sister felt, I dares to say; ant he wast prave as a pull-dog, ant generous, ant goot-naturet, ant many persons was quite captivatet by all t'ese showy atfantages, ant t'ought him petter ast he really wast. Yes, yes, Dus, my chilt, he hat his goot qualities, as well ast his pat. Put, t'e Malpones pe gentlemen, as ist seen py Frank, Dus's prother, ant py ot'er mempers of t'e family. T'en my mot'er's family, py which I am relatet to Dus, wast very goot—even petter t'an t'e Coejemans—ant t'e gal is a gentlewoman py pirt'. No one can deny t'at; put ploot won't do eferyt'ing. Chiltren must pe fet, and clot'et; ant money ist necessary, a'ter all, for t'e harmony ant comfort of families. I know Matam Littlepage, in partic'lar. She ist a da'ter of olt Harman Mortaunt, who wast a grant gentleman in t'e lant, ant t'e owner of Ravensnest, ast well ast of ot'er estates, ant who kept t'e highest company in t'e profince. Now Matam Littlepage, who hast peen t'us born, ant etucatet, ant associatet, may not like t'e itee of hafin Dus Malpone, a chainpearer's niece, ant a gal t'at hast peen chainpearer herself, for which I honor ant lofe her so much t'e more, Mortaunt, lat; put for which an ill-chutgin' worlt wilt despise her—"

"My mother—my noble-hearted, right-judging and right-feeling mother—never!" I exclaimed, in a burst of feeling I found it impossible to control.

My words, manner and earnestness produced a profound impression on my auditors. A gleam of pained delight shot into and out of the countenance of Ursula, like the passage of the electric spark. Chainbearer gazed on me intently, and it was easy to trace, in the expression of his face, the deep interest he felt in my words, and the importance he attached to them. As for Frank Malbone, he fairly turned away to conceal the tears that forced themselves from his eyes.

"If I coult t'ink ast much—if I coult hope ast much, Mortaunt," resumed Chainbearer, "it woult pe a plesset relief to my partin' spirit, for I know General Littlepage well enough to pe sartain t'at he ist a just ant right-mintet

man, ant t'at, in t'e long run, he woult see matters ast he ought to see t'em. Wit' Matam Littlepage I fearet it was tifferent; for I haf always hearet t'at t'e Mortaunts was tifferent people, ant felt ast toppin' people commonly do feel. T'is makes some change in my itees, ant some change in my plans. Howsefer, my young frients, I haf now to ask of you each a promise—a solemn promise mate to a tyin' man—ant it ist t'is—"

"First hear me, Chainbearer," I interposed eagerly, "before you involve Ursula heedlessly, and I had almost said cruelly, in any incautious promise, that may make both our lives miserable hereafter. You yourself first invited, tempted, courted me to love her; and now, when I know and confess her worth, you throw ice on my flame, and command me to do that of which it is too late to think."

"I own it, I own it, lat, ant hope t'e Lort, in his great marcy, wilt forgif ant parton t'e great mistake I mate. We haf talket of t'is pefore, Mortaunt, ant you may rememper I tolt you it was Dus herself who first mate me see t'e trut' in t'e matter, ant how much petter ant more pecomin' it wast in me to holt you pack, t'an to encourage ant leat you on. How comes it, my tear gal, t'at you haf forgot all t'is, ant now seem to wish me to do t'e fery t'ing you atviset me not to do?"

Ursula's face became pale as death; then it flashed to the brightness of a summer sunset, and she sank on her knees, concealing her countenance in the coarse quilt of the bed, as her truthful and ingenuous nature poured out her answer.

"Uncle Chainbearer," she said, "when we first talked on this subject I had never seen Mordaunt."

I knelt at the side of Ursula, folded her to my bosom, and endeavored to express the profound sentiment of gratitude that I felt at hearing this ingenuous explanation, by such caresses as nature and feeling dictated. Dus, however, gently extricated herself from my arms, and rising, we both stood waiting the effect of what had just been seen and heard on Chainbearer.

"I see t'at natur' is stronger t'an reason, ant opinion,

ant custom," the old man resumed, after a long, meditative pause; "I haf put little time to spent in t'is matter, howsefer, my chiltren, ant must pring it to a close. Promise me, pot' of you, t'at you will nefer marry wit'out t'e free consent of General Littlepage, ant t'at of olt Matam Littlepage, ant young Matam Littlepage, each or all pein' lifiu'."

"I do promise you, Uncle Chainbearer," said Dus, with a promptitude that I could hardly pardon, "I do promise you, and will keep my promise, as I love you and fear and honor my Maker. 'T would be misery to me to enter a family that was not willing to receive me—"

"Ursula!—dearest—dearest Ursula—do you reflect! Am I, then, nothing in your eyes?"

"It would also be misery to live without you, Mordaunt; but in one case I should be supported by a sense of having discharged my duty; while in the other, all that went wrong would appear a punishment for my own errors."

I would not promise; for, to own the truth, while I never distrusted my father or mother for a single instant, I did distrust my dear and venerable grandmother. I knew that she had not only set her heart on my marrying Priscilla Bayard; but that she had a passion for making matches in her now family; and I feared that she might have some of the tenacity of old age in maintaining her opinions. Dus endeavored to prevail on me to promise; but I evaded the pledge; and all solicitations were abandoned in consequence of a remark that was soon after made by Chainbearer.

"Nefer mint—nefer mint, darlint, your promise is enough. So long as you pe true, what matters it w'et'er Mortaunt is heatstrong or not? Ant now, children, ast I wish to talk no more of t'e matters of t'is worlt, put to gif all my metitations ant language to t'e t'ings of Got, I wilt utter my partin' worts to you. W'et'er you marry or not, I pray Almighty Got to gif you his pest plessin's in t'is life, ant in t'at which ist to come. Lif in sich a way, my tear chiltren, as to pe apel to meet t'is awful moment, in which you see me placed, wit' hope ant joy, so t'at we may all meet hereafter in t'e courts of heafen. Amen."

A short, solemn pause succeeded this benediction, when

it was interrupted by a fearful groan, that struggled out of the broad chest of Thousandacres. All eyes were turned on the other bed, which presented a most impressive contrast to the calm scene that surrounded the parting soul of him about whom we had been gathered. I alone advanced to the assistance of Prudence, who, woman-like, clung to her husband to the last; "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh." I must own, however, that horror paralyzed my limbs; and that when I got as far as the foot of the squatter's bed, I stood riveted to the place like a rooted tree.

Thousandacres had been raised by means of quilts until half his body lay almost in a sitting position; a change he had ordered during the previous scene. His eyes were open; ghastly, wandering, hopeless. As the lips contracted with the convulsive twitchings of death, they gave to his grim visage a species of sardonic grin that rendered it doubly terrific. At this moment a sullen calm came over the countenance, and all was still. I knew that the last breath remained to be drawn, and waited for it as the charmed bird gazes at the basilisk-eye of the snake. It came, drawing aside the lips so as to show every tooth, and not one was missing in that iron frame; when, finding the sight too frightful for even my nerves, I veiled my eyes. When my hand was removed, I caught one glimpse of that dark tenement in which the spirit of the murderer and squatter had so long dwelt, Prudence being in the act of closing the glary, but still fiery eyes. I never before had looked upon so revolting a corpse; and never wish to see its equal again.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Mild as a babe reclines himself to rest,
And smiling sleeps upon the mother's breast—
Tranquil, and with a patriarch's hope, he gave
His soul to heaven, his body to the grave."

HARTE.

I SAW that neither Chainbearer nor Dus looked at the revolting object presented in the corpse of Thousandacres, after that selfish and self-willed being ceased to live. I had another hut prepared immediately for its reception, and the body was removed to it without delay. Thither Prudence accompanied the senseless body; and there she passed the remainder of the day, and the whole of the succeeding night, attended by Lowiny—with occasional offers of food and assistance from the men of the posse. Two or three of the latter, carpenters by trade, made a coffin of pine, and the body was placed in it in the customary manner. Others dug a grave in the centre of one of those rough fields that the squatter had appropriated to his own uses thus making everything ready for the interment, as soon as the coroner, who had been sent for, should have had his sitting over the body.

The removal of the remains of Thousandacres left a sort of holy calm in the cabin of Chainbearer. My old friend was fast sinking; and he said but little. His consciousness continued to the last, and Dus was often at prayer with him in the course of that day. Frank and I aided in doing the duty of nurses; and we prevailed on Ursula to retire to the loft, and catch some rest, after her unwearying watchfulness. It was near sunset that old Andries again addressed himself particularly to me, who was sitting at his side, Dus being then asleep.

"I shalt lif till mornin', I now fint, Mortaunt," he said; "put, let deat' come when it wilt, it ist sent py my Lort and Maker, ant it ist welcome. Deat' hast no fears for me."

"He never had, Captain Coejemans, as the history of your whole career in the army shows."

"Yes, lat, t'ere wast a time when I shoult haf peen glat to haf peen shot on t'e fielt, and to haf diet with Montgomery, ant Laurens, ant Wooster, and Warren, and sichlike gallant heroes; put t'at ist all gone, now. I'm like a man t'at hast peen walkin' over a wite plain, and who hast come to its tarmination, where he sees pefore him an entless apyss into which he must next step. At such a sight, lat, all t'e trouples, ant lapors, ant tifficulties of t'e plain seem so triflin', t'at t'ay pe forgotten. Mint, I do not wish to say t'at eternity is an apyss to me in fears, ant pains, ant tespair; for t'e gootness of Got has enlightenet my mint on t'at supject, ant hope, ant love, ant longin' for t'e presence of my Maker, stant in t'eir places. Mortaunt, my lat, pefore I quit you, I coult wish to say a coople of worts to you on t'is sacret supject, if 't will gif no offence?"

"Say all, and what you please, dear Chainbearer. We are friends of the camp and the field, and the advice of no one could be more welcome to me than yours, given at a moment as solemn and truthful as this."

"T'ank ye, Mortaunt; t'ank ye wit' all my heart. You know how it hast peen wit' me, since poyhoot; for often ant often you ant I haf talket over t'ese t'ings in camp. I wast t'rown young upon t'e worlt ant wast left wit'out fat'er, or mot'er, to pring myself up. An only chilt of my own fat'er, for Dus comes from a half-sister, you know, t'ere wast no one to care for me in partic'lar, and I growet up in great ignorance of t'e Lort of Hosts, ant my tuties to him, ant to his plesset son, more ast anyt'ing else. Well, Mortaunt, you know how it ist in t'e woots, ant in t'e army. A man neet not pe ferry pat, to pe far from pein' as goot as ist expectet of him py t'e Almighty, who gafe him his soul, ant who reteemet him from his sins, ant who holts out taily t'e means of grace. When I come here wit' Dus, a

chilt knewest almost as much of t'e real natur' of religion ast I knewest. Put, t'at precious gal, t'rough Divine grace, hast peen t'e means of pringin' an olt ant ignorant man to a sense of his true condition, ant to petter hapits, t'an t'ose you knowest in him. Once I lovet a frolick, Mortaunt, and punce ant ot'er savory liquors was fery pleasant to me; ay, ant even a'ter years might ant shoult haf teachet me t'e folly of sich ways. Put you haf not seen t'e glass at my lips t'is summer, lat, at unseemly moments, or in unseemly numpers of times, ant t'at ist owin' to the confersations I haf hat wit' Dus on t'e supject. It woult haf tone your heart goot, Mortaunt, to haf seen t'e tear gal seated on my knee, combin' my olt gray hairs wit' her telicate white fingers, ant playin' with my hart, ret cheeks, ast t'e infant plays wit' t'e cheeks of t'e mot'er, whilst she talket to me of t'e history of Christ, ant his sufferin's for us all—ant tolt me t'e way to learn to know my Safiour in trut' ant sincerity! You t'ink Dus hantsome; ant pleasant to look upon; ant pleasant to talk wit'—put you can nefer know t'e gal in her colors of golt, Mortaunt, till she pegins to converse wit' you, unreservetly, apout Got and retemtion!"

"I can believe anything in favor of Ursula Malbone, my dear Chainbearer; and no music could be sweeter, to my ears, than thus to hear you pronouncing her praise."

The death of Chainbearer occurred, as he had himself prognosticated, about the time of the return of light on the succeeding morning. A more tranquil end I never witnessed. He ceased to suffer pain hours before he drew his last breath; but he had whispered to me, in the course of that day, that he endured agony at moments. He wished me to conceal the fact from Dus, however, lest it should increase her grief. "So long ast t'e tear gal ist in ignorance of my sufferin's," the excellent old man added in his whisper, "she cannot feel so much for me; since she must have confitence in t'e value of her own goot work, ant s'pose me to pe only trawin' nearer to happiness. Put, you ant I know, Mortaunt, t'at men are not often shot t'rough t'e poty wit'out feelin' much pain; ant I haf hat my share—yes, I haf hat my share!" Nevertheless, it would have

been difficult for one who was not in the secret to detect the smallest sign that the sufferer endured a tithe of the agony he actually underwent. Ursula was deceived; and to this hour she is ignorant how much her uncle endured. But, as I have said, this pain ceased altogether about nine o'clock, and Andries even slumbered for many minutes at a time. Not long before the light returned, however, he became aroused, and never slumbered again until he fell into the long, last sleep of death. His niece prayed with him about five; after which he seemed to consider himself as ready for the final march.

It might have been owing to the age of the patient; but in this instance death announced his near approach by a rapid loss of the senses. At first came a difficulty of hearing; and then the quick decay of the sense of sight. The first was made known to us by a repetition of questions that had already been more than once answered; while the painful fact that sight, if not absolutely gone, was going, was brought home to us by the circumstance that, while Dus was actually hovering over him like a guardian angel, he inquired anxiously where she was.

"I am here, Uncle Chainbearer," answered the dear girl, in tremulous tones, "here, before you, and am about to wet your lips."

"I want t'e gal—t'at ist—I wish her to pe near when t'e spirit mounts to heafen. Haf her callet, Frank or Mortaunt."

"Dear—dearest uncle, I am here, now—here before you—closest to you of all—almost in your arms," answered Dus, speaking loud enough to make herself heard, by an effort that cost her a great deal. "Do not think I can ever desert you, until I know that your spirit has gone to the mercy-seat of God!"

"I knowet it," said Chainbearer, endeavoring to raise his arms to feel for his niece, who met the effort by receiving his feeble and clammy hand in both her own. "Remember my wishes apout Mortaunt, gal—yet, shoult t'e family agree, marry him wit' my plessin'—yes, my pest plessin'. Kiss me, Dus. Wast t'em your lips?—t'ey felt colt; ant you are nefer colt of hant or heart. Mortaunt—kiss me

too, lat—t'at wast warmer, ant hat more feelin' in it. Frank, gif me your hant—I owe you money—t'ere ist a stockin' half full of tollars. Your sister wilt pay my tebts. Ant General Littlepage owes me money—put most he owest me goot will. I pray Got to pless him—ant to pless Matam Littlepage—ant olt Matam Littlepage, t'at I nefer did see—ant t'e major, or colonel, ast he is now callet—ant all our rigiment—ant your rigiment, too, Frank, which was a fery goot rigiment. Farewell, Frank—Dus—sister—precious—Christ Jesus, receive my—"

These words came with difficulty, and were whispered, rather than uttered aloud. They came at intervals, too, especially toward the last, in a way to announce the near approach of the state of which they were the more immediate precursors. The last syllable I have recorded was no sooner uttered, than the breath temporarily ceased. I removed Dus by gentle force, placing her in the arms of her brother, and turned to note the final respiration. That final breath in which the spirit appears to be exhaled, was calm, placid, and as easy as comports with the separation of soul and body; leaving the hard, aged, wrinkled, but benevolent countenance of the deceased, with an expression of happy repose on it, such as the friends of the dead love to look upon. Of all the deaths I had then witnessed, this was the most tranquil, and the best calculated to renew the hopes of the Christian. As for myself, it added a profound respect for the character and moral qualities of Ursula Malbone, to the love and admiration I bore her already, the fruits of her beauty, wit, heart, and other attractions.

The two expected deaths had now taken place, and it only remained to dispose of the legal questions connected with the events which had caused them, inter the bodies, and return to the 'Nest. I saw that one of the cabins was prepared for the reception of Ursula and Lowiny, the latter still clinging to us, while the body of Chainbearer was laid out in a coffin that had been made by the same hands, and at the same time, as that of Thousandacres. About noon, the coroner arrived, not 'Squire Newcome, but another, for whom he had himself sent; and a jury was immediately

collected from among the members of the posse. The proceedings were of no great length. I told my story, or as much of it as was necessary, from beginning to end, and others gave their testimony as to the proceedings at different periods in the events. The finding was, in the case of Chainbearer, "murder by the hand of some person unknown;" and in that of Thousandacres, "accidental death." The first was right, unquestionably; as to the last, I conceive, there was as little of "accident" as ever occurred, when a man was shot through the body by a steady hand, and an unerring eye. But such was the verdict, and I had nothing but conjectures for my opinion as to the agency of the Indian in killing the squatter.

That evening, and a cool autumnal night it was, we buried Thousandacres, in the centre of the field I have mentioned. Of all his numerous family, Prudence and Lowiny alone were present. The service was short and the man of violence descended to mingle with the clods of the earth, without a common prayer, a verse from Holy Writ, or any religious rite whatever. The men who had borne the body, and a few spectators present, filled the grave, rounded it handsomely, and covered it with sods, and were turning away in silence, to retrace their steps to the dwellings, when the profound stillness which had reigned throughout the whole of the brief ceremony, was suddenly broken by the clear, full voice of Prudence, who spoke in a tone and manner that arrested every step.

"Men and brethren," said this extraordinary woman, who had so many of the vices of her condition, relieved by so many of the virtues of her sex and origin. "Men and brethren," she said, "for I cannot call ye neighbors, and will not call you foes, I thank ye for this act of decent regard to the wants of both the departed and the living, and that ye have thus come to assist in burying my dead out of my sight."

Some such address, even a portion of these very words, were customary; but as no one had expected anything of the sort at that moment, they startled as much as they surprised us. As the rest of the party recovered from its

wonder, however, it proceeded toward the huts, leaving me alone with Prudence, who stood, swinging her body as usual, by the side of the grave.

"The night threatens to be cool," I said, "and you had better return with me to the dwelling."

"What 's the houses to me, now! Aaron is gone, the b'ys be fled, and their wives and children, and my children, be fled, leaving none in this clearin' but Lowiny, who belongs more to your 'n in feelin', than to me and mine, and the body that lies beneath the clods! There 's property in the housen, that I do s'pose even the law would give us, and maybe some one may want it. Give me that, Major Littlepage, to help to clothe and feed my young, and I 'll never trouble this place ag'in. They 'll not call Aaron a squatter for takin' up that small piece of arth; and one day, perhaps, you 'll not grudge to me as much more by its side. It 's little more squattin' that I can do, and the next pitch I make, will be the last."

"There is no wish on my part, good woman, to injure you. Your effects can be taken away from this place whenever you please, and I will even help you to do it," I answered, "in such a way as to put it in the power of your sons to receive the goods without risk to themselves. I remember to have seen a batteau of some size in the stream below the mill; can you tell me whether it remains there or not?"

"Why should n't it? The b'ys built it two years ago, to transport things in, and it 's not likely to go off of itself."

"Well, then, I will use that boat to get your effects off with safety to yourself. To-morrow, everything of any value that can be found about this place, and to which you can have any right, shall be put in that batteau, and I will send the boat, when loaded, down the stream, by means of my own black and the Indian, who shall abandon it a mile or two below, where those you may send to look for it, can take possession and carry the effects to any place you may choose."

The woman seemed surprised, and even affected by this proposal, though she a little distrusted my motives.

"Can I depend on this, Major Littlepage?" she asked, doubtingly. "Tobit and his brethren would be desp'rate, if any scheme to take 'em should be set on foot under sich a disguise."

"Tobit and his brethren have nothing to fear from treachery of mine. Has the word of a gentleman no value in your eyes?"

"I know that gentlemen gin'rally do as they promise; and so I've often told Aaron, as a reason for not bein' hard on their property, but he never would hear to it. Waal, Major Littlepage, I'll put faith in you, and will look for the batteau at the place you've mentioned. God bless you for this, and may He prosper you in that which is nearest your heart! We shall never see each other ag'in—farewell."

"You surely will return to the house, and pass the night comfortably under a roof!"

"No; I'll quit you here. The housen have little in 'em now that I love, and I shall be happier in the woods."

"But the night is cool, and, ere it be morning it will become even chilling and cold."

"It's colder in that grave," answered the woman, pointing mournfully with her long, skinny finger to the mound which covered the remains of her husband. "I'm used to the forest and go to look for my children. The mother that looks for her children is not to be kept back by winds and frost. Farewell ag'in, Major Littlepage. May God remember what you have done, and will do, for me and mine!"

"But you forget your daughter. What is to become of your daughter?"

"Lowiny has taken desp'rately to Dus Malbone, and wishes to stay with her while Dus wishes to have her stay. If they get tired of each other, my da'ghter can easily find us. No gal of mine will be long put out in sich a s'arch."

As all this sounded probable and well enough, I had no further objections to urge. Prudence waved her hand in adieu, and away she went across the dreary-looking fields

with the strides of a man, burying her tall, gaunt figure in the shadow of the wood, with as little hesitation as another would have entered the well-known avenues of some town. I never saw her afterward; though one or two messages from her did reach me through Lowiny.

As I was returning from the grave, Jaap and the Trackless came in from their scout. The report they made was perfectly satisfactory. By the trail, which they followed for miles, the squatters had actually absconded, pushing for some distant point, and nothing more was to be feared from them in that part of the country. I now gave my orders as respected the goods and chattels of the family, which were neither very numerous nor very valuable; and it may as well be said here as later, that everything was done next day, strictly according to promise. The first of the messages that I received from Prudence came within a month, acknowledging the receipt of her effects, even to the gear of the mill, and expressing her deep gratitude for the favor. I have reason to think, too, that nearly half the lumber fell into the hands of these squatters, quite that portion of it being in the stream at the time we removed from the spot, and floating off with the rains that soon set in. What was found at a later day was sold, and the proceeds were appropriated to meet the expenses of, and to make presents to the posse, as an encouragement to such persons to see the majesty of the laws maintained.

Early next morning we made our preparations to quit the deserted mill. Ten of the posse arranged themselves into a party to see the body of Chainbearer transported to the 'Nest. This was done by making a rude bier, that was carried by two horses, one preceding the other, and having the corpse suspended between them. I remained with the body; but Dus, attended by Lowiny, and protected by her brother, preceded us, halting at Chainbearer's huts for our arrival. At this point we passed the first night of our journey, Dus and Frank again preceding us, always on foot, to the 'Nest. At this place, the final halt of poor Andries, the brother and sister arrived at an hour before dinner, while we did not get in with the body until the sun was just setting.

As our little procession drew near the house, I saw a number of wagons and horses in the orchard that spread around it, which at first I mistook for a collection of the tenants, met to do honor to the manes of Chainbearer. A second look, however, let me into the true secret of the case. As we drew slowly near, the whole procession on foot, I discovered the persons of my own dear parents, that of Colonel Follock, those of Kate, Pris. Bayard, Tom Bayard, and even of my sister Kettletas, in the group. Last of all, I saw, pressing forward to meet me, yet a little repelled by the appearance of the coffin, my dear and venerable old grandmother, herself!

Here, then, were assembled nearly all of the house of Littlepage, with two or three near friends, who did not belong to it! Frank Malbone was among them, and doubtless had told his story, so that our visitors could not be surprised at our appearance. On the other hand, I was at no loss to understand how all this had been brought about. Frank's express had found the party at Fishkill, had communicated his intelligence, set everybody in motion on the wings of anxiety and love, and here they were. The journey had not been particularly rapid either, plenty of time having elapsed between the time when my seizure by the squatters was first made known to my friends, and the present moment, to have got a message to Lilacsbush, and to have received its answer.

Kate afterward told me we made an imposing and solemn appearance, as we came up to the gate of Ravensnest, bearing the body of Chainbearer. In advance marched Susquesus and Jaap, each armed, and the latter carrying an axe, acting, as occasion required, in the character of a pioneer. The bearers and attendants came next, two and two, armed as a part of the posse, and carrying packs; next succeeded the horses with the bier, each led by a keeper; I was the principal mourner, though armed like the rest, while Chainbearer's poor slaves, now the property of Dus, brought up the rear, carrying his compass, chains, and other emblems of his calling.

We made no halt, but passing the crowd collected on

the lawn, we went through the gateway, and only came to a stand when we had reached the centre of the court. As all the arrangements had been previously made, the next step was to inter the body. I knew that General Littlepage had often officiated on such occasions, and a request to that effect was made to him, through Tom Bayard. As for myself, I said not a word to any of my own family, begging them to excuse me until I had seen the last offices performed to the remains of my friend. In half an hour all was ready, and again the solemn procession was resumed. As before, Susquesus and Jaap led the way, the latter now carrying a shovel, and acting in the capacity of a sexton. The Indian bore a flaming torch of pine, the darkness having so far advanced as to render artificial light necessary. Others of the party had these natural flambeaux, also, which added greatly to the solemnity and impressiveness of the scene. General Littlepage preceded the corpse, carrying a prayer-book. Then followed the bearers, with the coffin, the horses being now dismissed. Dus veiled in black from head to foot and leaning on Frank, appeared as chief mourner. Though this was not strictly in conformity with real New York habits, yet no one thought the occasion one on which to manifest the customary reserve of the sex. Everybody in or near the 'Nest, females as well as males, appeared to do honor to the memory of Chainbearer, and Dus came forth as the chief mourner. Priscilla Bayard, leaning on the arm of her brother Tom, edged herself in next to her friend, though they had not as yet exchanged a syllable together; and, after all was over, Pris. told me it was the first funeral she had ever attended, or the first time she had ever been at a grave. The same was true of my grandmother, my mother, and both my sisters. I mention this lest some antiquarian, a thousand years hence, might light on this manuscript, and mistake our customs. Of late years, the New Englanders are introducing an innovation on the old usage of the colony; but, among the upper real New York families, women do not even now attend funerals. In this respect, I apprehend, we follow the habits of England,

where females of the humbler classes, as I have heard, do, while their superiors do not appear on such occasions. The reason of the difference between the two is very easily appreciated, though I limit my statements to what I conceive to be the facts, without affecting to philosophize on them.

But all our ladies attended the funeral of Chainbearer. I came next to Tom and Priscilla, Kate pressing up to my side, and placing her arm in mine, without speaking. As she did this, however, the dear girl laid her little hand on mine, and gave the latter a warm pressure, as much as to say how greatly she was rejoiced at finding me safe, and out of the hands of the Philistines. The rest of the party fell in behind, and, as soon as the Indian saw that everybody was placed, he moved slowly forward, holding his flaming torch so high as to light the footsteps of those near him.

Directions had been sent to the 'Nest to dig a grave for Andries in the orchard, and at no great distance from the verge of the rocks. As I afterward ascertained, it was at the very spot where one of the most remarkable events in the life of the general had occurred, an event in which both Susquesus and Jaap had been conspicuous actors. Thither, then, we proceeded in funereal order, and with funereal tread, the torches throwing their wild and appropriate light over the nearer accessories of the scene. Never did the service sound more solemnly to me, there being a pathos and richness in my father's voice that were admirably adapted to the occasion. Then he felt what he was reading, which does not always happen even when a clergyman officiates; for not only was General Littlepage a close friend of the deceased, but he was a devout Christian. I felt a throb at the heart, as I heard the fall of the first clods on the coffin of Chainbearer; but reflection brought its calm, and from the moment Dus became, as it might be, doubly dear to me. It appeared to me as if all her uncle's love and care had been transferred to myself, and that, henceforth, I was to be his representative with his much-beloved niece. I did not hear a sob from Ursula dur-

ing the whole ceremony. I knew that she wept, and wept bitterly; but her self-command was so great as to prevent any undue obtrusion of her griefs on others. We all remained at the grave until Jaap had rounded it with his utmost skill, and had replaced the last sod. Then the procession formed anew, and we accompanied Frank and Dus to the door of the house, when she entered and left us without. Priscilla Bayard, however, glided in after her friend, and I saw them locked in each other's arms, through the window of the parlor, by the fire within. At the next moment, they retired together to the little room that Dus had appropriated to her own particular use.

Now it was that I embraced and was embraced by my friends. My mother held me long in her arms, called me her "dear, dear boy," and left tears on my face. Kate did pretty much the same, though she said nothing. As for Anneke, my dear sister Kettletas, her embrace was like herself, gentle, sincere, and warm-hearted. Nor must my dear old grandmother be forgotten; for though she came last of the females, she held me longest in her arms, and after "thanking God" devoutly for my late escape, she protested that "I grew every hour more and more like the Littlepages." Aunt Mary kissed me with her customary affection.

A portion of the embraces, however, occurred after we had entered the parlor, which Frank, imitating Dus, had delicately, as well as considerately, left to ourselves. Colonel Follock, nevertheless, gave me his salutations and congratulations before we left the court; and they were as cordial and hearty as if he had been a second father.

"How atmiraply the general reats, Mortaunt," our old friend added, becoming very Dutch as he got to be excited. "I haf always sayet t'at Corny Littlepage woult make as goot a tominie as any rector t'ey ever hat in olt Trinity. Put he mate as goot a soltier, too. Corny ist an extraordinary man, Mortaunt, ant one tay he wilt pe gofernor."

This was a favorite theory of Colonel Van Valkenburgh's. For himself, he was totally without ambition whereas he thought nothing good enough for his friend, Corny Little-

page. Scarce a year passed that he did not allude to the propriety of elevating "t'e general" to some high office or other; nor am I certain that his allusions of this nature may not have had their effect; since my father was elected to Congress as soon as the new constitution was formed, and continued to sit as long as his health and comfort would permit.

Supper was prepared for both parties of travellers, of course, and in due time we all took our seats at table. I say all; but that was not literally exact, inasmuch as neither Frank, Dus, nor Priscilla Bayard, appeared among us again that evening. I presume each had something to eat, though all took the meal apart from the rest of the family.

After supper I was requested to relate, *seriatim*, all the recent events connected with my visit to the 'Nest, my arrest and liberation. This I did, of course, seated at my grandmother's side, the old lady holding one of my hands the whole time I was speaking. The most profound attention was lent by all the party; and a thoughtful silence succeeded my narration, which ended only with the history of our departure from the mills.

"Ay," exclaimed Colonel Follock, who was the first to speak after I had terminated my own account. "So much for Yankee religion! I 'll warrant you now, Corny, t'at t'e fellow, T'ousantacres, coult preach and pray just like all t'e rest of our Pilgrim fat'ers."

"There are rogues of New York birth and extraction, Colonel Follock, as well as of New England," answered my father dryly; "and the practice of squatting is incidental to the condition of the country; as men are certain to make free with the property that is least protected and watched. Squatters are made by circumstances, and not by any peculiar disposition of a particular portion of the population to appropriate the land of others to their own uses. It would be the same with our hogs and our horses, were they equally exposed to the depredations of lawless men, let the latter come from Connecticut or Long Island."

"Let me catch one of t'ese gentry among my horses!" answered the colonel, with a menacing shake of his head, for,

Dutchman-like, he had a wonderful love for the species; "I woult crop him wit' my own hands, wit'out chudge or chury."

"That might lead to evils almost as great as those produced by squatting, Dirck," returned my father.

"By the way, sir," I put in, knowing that Colonel Follock sometimes uttered extravagances on such subjects, though as honest and well-meaning a man as ever breathed, "I have forgotten to mention a circumstance that may have some interest, as 'Squire Newcome is an old acquaintance of yours." I then recounted all the facts connected with the first visit of Mr. Jason Newcome to the clearing of Thousandacres, and the substance of the conversation I had overheard between the squatter and the upright magistrate. General Littlepage listened with profound attention; and as for Colonel Follock, he raised his eyebrows, grunted, laughed as well as a man could with his lips compressing a pipe, and uttered in the best way he was able, under the circumstances, and with sufficient sententiousness, the single word "Danpury!"

"No—no—Dirck," answered my father, "we must not put all the crimes and vices on our neighbors, for many of them grow, from the seedling to the tree bearing fruit, in our own soil. I know this man, Jason Newcome, reasonably well; and, while I have confided in him more than I ought, perhaps, I have never supposed he was the person in the least influenced by our conventional notions of honor and integrity. What is called 'law honest,' I have believed him to be; but it would seem in that I have been mistaken. Still, I am not prepared to admit that the place of his birth, or his education, is the sole cause of his backslidings."

"Own t'e trut', Corny, like a man ast you pe, ant confess it ist all our Pilgrim fat'ers' ant Danpury itees. What use ist t'ere in misleetin' your own son, who wilt come, sooner or later, to see t'e whole trut'?"

"I should be sorry, Dirck, to teach my son any narrow prejudices. The last war has thrown me much among officers from New England, and the intercourse has taught me to esteem that portion of our fellow-citizens more than was our custom previously to the Revolution."

"'Tush for 'intercourse,' ant 'esteem,' ant 'teachin',' Corny! T'e whole t'ing of squattin' hast crosset t'e Byram rifer, ant unless we look to it, t'e Yankees wilt get all our lants away from us!"

"Jason Newcome, when I knew him best, and I may say first," continued my father, without appearing to pay much attention to the observations of his friend the colonel, "was an exceedingly unfledged, narrow-minded provincial, with a most overweening notion, certainly, of the high excellencies of the particular state of society from which he had not long before emerged. He had just as great a contempt for New York, and New York wit, and New York usages, and especially for New York religion and morals, as Dirck here seems to have for all those excellencies as they are exhibited in New England. In a word, the Yankee despised the Dutchman, and the Dutchman abominated the Yankee. In all this there is nothing new, and I fancy the supercilious feeling of the New England man can very easily be traced to his origin in the mother country. But differences do exist, I admit, and I consider the feeling with which every New Englander comes among us, to be, by habit, adverse to our state of society in many particulars—some good and some bad—and this merely because he is not accustomed to them. Among other things, as a whole, the population of these States do not relish the tenures by which our large estates are held. There are plenty of men, from that quarter of the country who are too well taught, and whose honesty is too much of proof, not to wish to oppose anything that is wrong in connection with this subject; still, the prejudices of nearly all who come from the East are opposed to the relation of landlord and tenant, and this because they do not wish to see large landlords among them, not being large landlords themselves. I never found any gentleman, or man of education from New England, who saw any harm in a man's leasing a single farm to a single tenant, or half a dozen farms to half a dozen tenants; proof that it is not the tenure itself with which they quarrel, but with a class of men who are, or seem to be, their superiors."

"I have heard the argument used against the leasehold

system, that it retards the growth and lessens the wealth of any district in which it may prevail."

That it does not retard the growth, is proved by the fact that farms can be leased always, when it often requires years to sell them. This estate is half filled now, and will be entirely occupied long ere Mooseridge will be a third sold. That the latter may be the richest and the best tilled district, in the end, is quite probable; and this for the simple reasons that richer men buy than rent, to begin with, and the owner usually takes better care of his farm than the mere tenant. Some of the richest, best cultivated, and most civilized regions on earth, however, are those in which the tenures of the actual occupants are, and ever have been, merely leasehold. It is easy to talk, and to feel, in these matters, but not quite so easy to come to just conclusions as some imagine. There are portions of England, for instance —Norfolk in particular—where the improvements are almost entirely owing to the resources and enterprise of the large proprietors. As a question of political economy, Mordaunt, depend on it, this is one that has two sides to it; as a question of mere stomach, each man will be apt to view it as his gorge is up or down."

Shortly after this was said, the ladies complained of fatigue, a feeling in which we all participated; and the party broke up for the night. It seems the general had sent back word by the express of the accommodations he should require; which enabled the good people of the 'Nest to make such arrangements as rendered everybody reasonably comfortable.

CHAPTER XXX.

"*Lid.* The victory is yours, sir.
King. It is a glorious one, and well sets off
Our scene of mercy; to the dead we tender
Our sorrow; to the living, ample wishes
Of future happiness."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

FATIGUE kept me in bed next morning until it was late. On quitting the house I passed through the gateway, then always left open—defence being no longer thought of—and walked musingly toward the grave of Chainbearer. Previously to doing this, I went as far as each corner of the building, however, to cast an eye over the fields. On one side of the house I saw my father and mother, arm in arm, gazing around them; while on the other, Aunt Mary stood by herself, looking wistfully in the direction of a wooded ravine, which had been the scene of some important event in the early history of the country. When she turned to re-enter the building, I found her face bathed in tears. This respectable woman, who was now well turned of forty, had lost her betrothed in battle, on that very spot, a quarter of a century before, and was now gazing on the sad scene for the first time since the occurrence of the event.

Something almost as interesting, though not of so sad a nature, also drew my parents to the other side of the house. When I joined them, an expression of grateful happiness, a little saddened perhaps by incidental recollections, was on the countenance of each. My dear mother kissed me affectionately as I drew near, and the general cordially gave me his hand while wishing me good morning.

"We were talking of you," observed the last, "at the very moment you appeared. Ravensnest is now becoming a valuable property; and its income, added to the products of this large and very excellent farm that you have in your own hands, should keep a country house, not only in abundance, but with something more. You will naturally think of marrying ere long, and your mother and I were just saying that you ought to build a good, substantial stone dwelling on this very spot, and settle down on your own property. Nothing contributes so much to the civilization of a country as to dot it with a gentry, and you will both give and receive advantages by adopting such a course. It is impossible for those who have never been witnesses of the result, to appreciate the effect produced by one gentleman's family in a neighborhood, in the way of manners, tastes, general intelligence, and civilization at large."

"I am very willing to do my duty, sir, in this, as in other particulars; but a good stone country house, such as a landlord ought to build on his property, will cost money, and I have no sum in hand to use for such a purpose."

"The house will cost far less than you suppose. Materials are cheap, and so is labor just now. Your mother and myself will manage to let you have a few extra thousands, for our town property is beginning to tell again, and fear nothing on that score. Make your selection of a spot, and lay the foundation of the house this autumn; order the lumber sawed, the lime burned, and other preparations made—and arrange matters so that you can eat your Christmas dinner, in the year 1785, in the new residence of Ravensnest. By that time you will be ready to get married, and we may all come up to the house-warming."

"Has anything occurred in particular, sir, to induce you to imagine I am in any haste to marry? You seem to couple matrimony and the new house together, in a way to make me think there has."

I caught the general there, and, while my mother turned her head aside and smiled, I saw that my father colored a little, though he made out to laugh. After a moment of embarrassment, however, he answered with spirit—my good

old grandmother coming up and linking her arm at his vacant side as he did so.

"Why, Mord, my boy, you can have very little of the sensibility of the Littlepages in you," he said, "if you can be a daily spectator of such female loveliness as is now near you, and not lose your heart."

Grandmother fidgeted, and so did my mother; for I could see that both thought the general had made too bold a demonstration. With the tact of their sex, they would have been more on their guard. I reflected a moment, and then determined to be frank; the present being as good a time as any other, to reveal my secret.

"I do not intend to be insincere with you, my dear sir," I answered, "for I know how much better it is to be open on matters that are of a common interest in a family, than to effect mysteriousness. I am a true Littlepage on the score of sensibility to the charms of the sex, and have not lived in daily familiar intercourse with female loveliness, without experiencing so much of its influence as to be a warm advocate for matrimony. It is my wish to marry, and that, too, before this new abode of Ravensnest can be completed."

The common exclamation of delight that followed this declaration, sounded in my ears like a knell, for I knew it must be succeeded by a disappointment exactly proportioned to the present hopes. But I had gone too far to retreat, and felt bound to explain myself.

"I'm afraid, my dear parents, and my beloved grandmother," I continued, as soon as I could speak, conscious of the necessity of being as prompt as possible, "that you have misunderstood me."

"Not at all, my dear boy—not at all," interrupted my father. "You admire Priscilla Bayard, but have not yet so far presumed on your reception as to offer. But what of that? Your modesty is in your favor; though I will acknowledge that, in my judgment, a gentleman is bound to let his mistress know, as soon as his own mind is made up, that he is a suitor for her hand, and that it is ungenerous and unmanly to wait until certain of success. Remem-

ber that, Mordaunt, my boy; modesty may be carried to a fault in a matter of this sort."

"You still misunderstand me, sir. I have nothing to reproach myself with on the score of manliness, though I may have gone too far in another way without consulting my friends. Beyond sincere good-will and friendship, Priscilla Bayard is nothing to me, and I am nothing to Priscilla Bayard."

"Mordaunt!" exclaimed a voice, that I never heard without its exciting filial tenderness.

"I have said but truth, dearest mother, and truth that ought to have been sooner said. Miss Bayard would refuse me to-morrow, were I to offer."

"You don't know that Mordaunt—you can't know it until you try," interrupted my grandmother, somewhat eagerly. "The minds of young women are not to be judged by the same rules as those of young men. Such an offer will not come every day, I can tell her; and she 's much too discreet and right-judging to do anything so silly. To be sure, I have no authority to say how Priscilla feels towards you; but, if her heart is her own, and Mordy Littlepage be not the youth that has stolen it, I am no judge of my own sex."

"But you forget, dearest grandmother, that were your flattering opinions in my behalf all true—as I have good reasons to believe they are not—but were they true, I could only regret it should be so; for I love another."

This time the sensation was so profound as to produce a common silence. Just at that moment an interruption occurred, of a nature both so sweet and singular, as greatly to relieve me at least, and to preclude the necessity of my giving any immediate account of my meaning. I will explain how it occurred.

The reader may remember that there were, originally, loops in the exterior walls of the house at Ravensnest, placed there for the purposes of defence, and which were used as small windows in these peaceable times. We were standing beneath one of those loops, not near enough, however, to be seen or heard by one at the loop, unless we raised our voices above the tone in which we were actually

conversing. Out of this loop, at that precise instant, issued the low, sweet strains of one of Dus's exquisite Indian hymns, I might almost call them, set, as was usual with her, to a plaintive Scotch melody. On looking toward the grave of Chainbearer, I saw Susquesus standing over it, and I at once understood the impulse which led Ursula to sing this song. The words had been explained to me, and I knew that they alluded to a warrior's grave.

The raised finger, the delighted expression of the eye, the attitude of intense listening which my beloved mother assumed, each and all denoted the pleasure and emotion she experienced. When, however, the singer suddenly changed the language to English, after the last guttural words of the Onondago had died on our ears, and commenced to the same strain a solemn English hymn, that was short in itself, but full of piety and hope, the tears started out of my mother's and grandmother's eyes, and even General Littlepage sought an occasion to blow his nose in a very suspicious manner. Presently, the sounds died away, and that exquisite melody ceased.

"In the name of wonder, Mordaunt, who can this nightingale be?" demanded my father, for neither of the ladies could speak.

"That is the person, sir, who has my plighted faith—the woman I must marry, or remain single."

"This, then, must be the Dus Malbone, or Ursula Malbone, of whom I have heard so much from Priscilla Bayard, within the last day or two," said my mother, in the tone and with the manner of one who is suddenly enlightened on any subject that has much interest with him or her; "I ought to have expected something of the sort, if half the praises of Priscilla be true."

No one had a better mother than myself. Thoroughly a lady in all that pertains to the character, she was also an humble and pious Christian. Nevertheless, humility and piety are, in some respects, particularly the first, matters of convention. The fitness of things had great merit in the eyes of both my parents, and I cannot say that it is entirely without it in mine. In nothing is this fitness of things

more appropriate than in equalizing marriages; and few things are less likely to be overlooked by a discreet parent, than to have all proper care that the child connects itself prudently; and that, too, as much in reference to station, habits, opinions, breeding in particular, and the general way of thinking, as to fortune. Principles are inferred among people of principle, as a matter of course; but subordinate to these, worldly position is ever of great importance in the eyes of parents. My parents could not be very different from those of other people, and I could see that both now thought that Ursula Malbone, the Chainbearer's niece, one who had actually carried chain herself, for I had lightly mentioned that circumstance is one of my letters, was scarcely a suitable match for the only son of General Littlepage. Neither said much, however; though my father did put one or two questions that were somewhat to the point, ere we separated.

"Am I to understand, Mordaunt," he asked, with a little of the gravity a parent might be expected to exhibit on hearing so unpleasant an announcement—"am I to understand, Mordaunt, that you are actually engaged to this young—eh-eh-eh—this young person?"

"Do not hesitate, my dear sir, to call Ursula Malbone a lady. She is a lady by both birth and education. The last, most certainly, or she never could have stood in the relation she does to your family."

"And what relation is that, sir?"

"It is just this, my dear father. I have offered to Ursula—indiscreetly, hastily, if you will, as I ought to have waited to consult you and my mother—but we do not always follow the dictates of propriety in a matter of so much feeling. I dare say, sir, you did better"—here I saw a slight smile on the pretty mouth of my mother, and I began to suspect that the general had been no more dutiful than myself in this particular—"but I hope my forgetfulness will be excused, on account of the influence of a passion which we all find so hard to resist."

"But what is the relation this young—lady—bears to my family, Mordaunt? You are not already married?"

"Far from it, sir; I should not so far have failed in respect to you three—or even to Anneke and Katrinke. I have offered, and have been conditionally accepted."

"Which condition is—"

"The consent of you three; the perfect approbation of my whole near connection. I believe that Dus, dear Dus, does love me, and that she would cheerfully give me her hand, were she certain of its being agreeable to you, but that no persuasion of mine will ever induce her so to do under other circumstances."

"This is something, for it shows the girl has principle," answered my father. "Why, who goes there?"

"Who went there?" sure enough. There went Frank Malbone and Priscilla Bayard, arm and arm, and so engrossed in conversation that they did not see who were observing them. I dare say they fancied they were in the woods quite sheltered from curious eyes, and at liberty to saunter about, as much occupied with each other as they pleased; or, what is more probable, that they thought of nothing, just then, but of themselves. They came out of the court, and walked off swiftly into the orchard, appearing to tread on air, and seemingly as happy as the birds that were carolling on the surrounding trees.

"There, sir," I said, significantly, "there, my dear mother, is the proof that Miss Priscilla Bayard will not break her heart on my account."

"This is very extraordinary, indeed!" exclaimed my much disappointed grandmother; "is not that the young man who we were told acted as Chainbearer's surveyor, Corny?"

"It is, my good mother, and a very proper and agreeable youth he is, as I know by a conversation held with him last night. It is very plain we have all been mistaken," added the general; "though I do not know that we ought to say that we have any of us been deceived."

"Here comes Kate, with a face which announces that she is fully mistress of the secret," I put in, perceiving my sister coming round our angle of the building, with a countenance which I knew betokened that her mind and heart

were full. She joined us, took my arm without speaking and followed my father, who led his wife and mother to a rude bench that had been placed at the foot of a tree, where we all took seats, each waiting for some other to speak. My grandmother broke the silence.

"Do you see Pris. Bayard yonder, walking with that Mr. Frank Chainbearer, or Surveyor, or whatever his name is, Katrinke dear?" asked the good old lady.

"I do grandmamma," answered the good young lady in a voice so pitched as to be hardly audible.

"And can you explain what it means, darling?"

"I believe I can, ma'am—if—if—Mordaunt wishes to hear."

"Don't mind me, Kate," returned I, smiling; "my heart will never be broken by Miss Priscilla Bayard."

The look of sisterly solicitude that I received from that honest-hearted girl, ought to have made me feel very grateful; and it did make me feel grateful, for a sister's affection is a sweet thing. I believe the calmness of my countenance and its smiling expression encouraged the dear creature, for she now began to tell her story as fast as was at all in rule.

"The meaning, then, is this," said Kate. "That gentleman is Mr. Francis Malbone, and he is the engaged suitor of Priscilla. I have heard all the facts from her own mouth."

"Will you, then, let us hear as many of them as it is proper we should know?" said the general, gravely.

"There is no wish on the part of Priscilla to conceal anything. She has known Mr. Malbone several years, and they have been attached all that time. Nothing impeded the affair but his poverty. Old Mr. Bayard objected to that, of course, you know, as fathers will, and Priscilla would not engage herself. But—do you not remember to have heard of the death of an old Mrs. Hazleton, at Bath, in England, this summer, mamma? The Bayards are in half-mourning for her, now."

"Certainly, my dear—Mrs. Hazleton was Mr. Bayard's aunt; I knew her well once, before she became a refugee—her husband was a half-pay Colonel Hazleton of the royal

artillery; and they were tories of course. The aunt was named Priscilla, and was godmother to our Pris."

"Just so—well, this lady has left Pris. ten thousand pounds in the English funds, and the Bayards now consent to her marrying Mr. Malbone. They say, too, but I don't think that can have had any influence, for Mr. Bayard and his wife are particularly disinterested people, as indeed are all the family—" added Kate hesitatingly and looking down: "but they say that the death of some young man will probably leave Mr. Malbone the heir of an aged cousin of his late father's."

"And now, my dear father and mother, you will perceive that Miss Bayard will not break her heart because I happen to love Dus Malbone. I see by your look Katrinke, that you have had some hint of this backsliding also."

"I have; and what is more, I have seen the young lady, and can hardly wonder at it. Anneke and I have been passing two hours with her this morning; and since you cannot get Pris., I know no other, Mordaunt, who will so thoroughly supply her place. Anneke is in love with her also!"

Dear, good, sober-minded, judicious Anneke; she had penetrated into the true character of Dus, in a single interview; a circumstance that I ascribed to the impression left by the recent death of Chainbearer. Ordinarily, that spirited young woman would not have permitted a sufficiently near approach in a first interview, to permit a discovery of so many of her sterling qualities; but now her heart was softened, and her spirit so much subdued, one of Anneke's habitual gentleness would be very apt to win on her sympathies, and draw the two close to each other. The reader is not to suppose that Dus had opened her mind like a vulgar school-girl, and made my sister a confidant of the relation in which she and I stood to one another. She had not said, or hinted, a syllable on the subject. The information Kate possessed had come from Priscilla Bayard, who obtained it from Frank, as a matter of course; and my sister subsequently admitted to me that her friend's happiness was augmented by the knowledge that I should

not be a sufferer by her earlier preference for Malbone, and that she was likely to have me for a brother-in-law. All this I gleaned from Kate, in our subsequent conferences.

"This is extraordinary!" exclaimed the general; "very extraordinary; and to me quite unexpected."

"We can have no right to control Miss Bayard's choice," observed my discreet and high-principled mother. "She is her own mistress, as far as we are concerned; and if her own parents approve of her choice, the less we say about it the better. As respects this connection of Mordaunt's, I hope he himself will admit of our right to have opinions."

"Perfectly so, my dearest mother. All I ask of you is to express no opinion, however, until you have seen Ursula —have become acquainted with her, and are qualified to judge of her fitness to be not only mine, but any man's wife. I ask but this of your justice."

"It is just; and I shall act on the suggestion," observed my father. "You have a right to demand this of us, Mordaunt, and I can promise for your mother, as well as myself."

"After all, Anneke," put in grandmother, "I am not sure we have no right to complain of Miss Bayard's conduct toward us. Had she dropped the remotest hint of her being engaged to this Malbrook, I would never have endeavored to lead my grandson to think of her seriously for one moment."

"Your grandson never has thought of her seriously for one moment, or for half a moment, dearest grandmother," I cried; "so give your mind no concern on that subject. Nothing of the sort could make me happier than to know that Priscilla Bayard is to marry Frank Malbone; unless it were to be certain I am myself to marry the latter's half-sister."

"How can this be? How could such a thing possibly come to pass, my child! I do not remember ever to have heard of this person—much less to have spoken to you on the subject of such a connection."

"Oh! dearest grandmother, we truant children sometimes get conceits of this nature into our heads and hearts,

without stopping to consult our relatives as we ought to do."

But it is useless to repeat all that was said in the long and desultory conversation that followed. I had no reason to be dissatisfied with my parents, who ever manifested toward me not only great discretion, but great indulgence. I confess, when a domestic came to say that Miss Dus was at the breakfast-table, waiting for us alone, I trembled a little for the effect that might be produced on her appearance by the scenes she had lately gone through. She had wept a great deal in the course of the last week; and when I last saw her, which was the glimpse caught at the funeral, she was pale and dejected in aspect. A lover is so jealous of even the impression that his mistress will make on those he wishes to admire her, that I felt particularly uncomfortable as we entered first the court, then the house, and last the eating-room.

A spacious and ample board had been spread for the accommodation of our large party. Anneke, Priscilla, Frank Malbone, Aunt Mary, and Ursula, were already seated when we entered, Dus occupying the head of the table. No one had commenced the meal, nor had the young mistress of the board even begun to pour out the tea and coffee (for my presence had brought abundance into the house), but there she sat, respectfully waiting for those to approach who might be properly considered the principal guests. I thought Dus had never appeared more lovely. Her dress was a neatly-arranged and tasteful half-mourning; with which her golden hair, rosy cheeks, and bright eyes, contrasted admirably. The cheeks of Dus, too, had recovered their color, and her eyes their brightness. The fact was that the news of her brother's improved fortunes had even been better than we were just told. Frank found letters for him at the 'Nest, announcing the death of his kinsman, with a pressing invitation to join the bereaved parent, then an aged and bed-ridden invalid, as his adopted son. He was urged to bring Dus with him; and he received a handsome remittance to enable him so to do without inconvenience to himself. This alone would have brought happiness

back to the countenance of the poor and dependent. Dus mourned her uncle in sincerity, and she long continued to mourn for him; but her mourning was that of the Christian who hoped. Chainbearer's hurt had occurred several days before; and the first feeling of sorrow had become lessened by time and reflection. His end had been happy; and he was now believed to be enjoying the fruition of his penitence through the sacrifice of the Son of God.

It was easy to detect the surprise that appeared in the countenances of all my parents, as Miss Malbone rose, like one who was now confident of her position and claims to give and to receive the salutations that were proper for the occasion. Never did any young woman acquit herself better than Dus, who courtesied gracefully as a queen; while she returned the compliments she received with the self-possession of one bred in courts. To this she was largely indebted to nature; though her schooling had been good. Many of the first young women of the colony had been her companions for years; and in that day, manner was far more attended to than it is getting to be amongst us now. My mother was delighted; for, as she afterward assured me, her mind was already made up to receive Ursula as a daughter; since she thought it due to honor to redeem my plighted faith. General Littlepage might not have been so very scrupulous; though even he admitted the right of the obligations I had incurred; but Dus fairly carried him by storm. The tempered sadness of her mien gave an exquisite finish to her beauty, rendering all she said, did, and looked, that morning, perfect. In a word, everybody was wondering; but everybody was pleased. An hour or two later, and after the ladies had been alone together, my excellent grandmother came to me and desired to have a little conversation with me apart. We found a seat in the arbor of the court; and my venerable parent commenced as follows:

"Well, Mordaunt, my dear, it is time that you should think of marrying and of settling in life. As Miss Bayard is happily engaged, I do not see that you can do better than to offer to Miss Malbone. Never have I seen so beautiful

a creature; and the generous-minded Pris. tells me she is as good, and virtuous, and wise, as she is lovely. She is well born and well educated; and may have a good fortune in the bargain, if that old Mr. Malbone is as rich as they tell me he is, and has conscience enough to make a just will. Take my advice, my dear son, and marry Ursula Malbone."

Dear grandmother! I did take her advice; and I am persuaded that, to her dying day, she was all the more happy under the impression that she had materially aided in bringing about the connection.

As General Littlepage and Colonel Follock had come so far, they chose to remain a month or two, in order to look after their lands, and to revisit some scenes in that part of the world in which both felt a deep interest. My mother, and Aunt Mary, too, seemed content to remain; for they remembered events which the adjacent country recalled to their minds with a melancholy pleasure. In the meanwhile Frank went to meet his cousin, and had time to return, ere our party was disposed to break up. During his absence everything was arranged for my marriage with his sister. This event took place just two months, to a day, from that of the funeral of Chainbearer. A clergyman was obtained from Albany to perform the ceremony, as neither party belonged to the Congregational order; and an hour after we were united, everybody left us alone at the 'Nest, on their return south. I say everybody, though Jaap and Susquesus were exceptions. These two remained, and remain to this hour; though the negro did return to Lilacsbush and Satanstoe to assemble his family, and to pay occasional visits.

There was much profound feeling, but little parade, at the wedding. My mother had got to love Ursula as if she were her own child; and I had not only the pleasure, but the triumph of seeing the manner in which my betrothed rendered herself from day to day, and this without any other means than the most artless and natural, more and more acceptable to my friends.

"This is perfect happiness," said Dus to me, one lovely

afternoon that we were strolling in company along the cliff, near the 'Nest—and a few minutes after she had left my mother's arms, who had embraced and blessed her, as a pious parent does both to a well-beloved child, "this is perfect happiness, Mordaunt, to be the chosen of you, and the accepted of your parents! I never knew, until now, what it is to have a parent. Uncle Chainbearer did all he could for me, and I shall cherish his memory to my latest breath —but uncle Chainbearer could never supply the place of a mother. How blessed, how undeservedly blessed does my lot promise to become! You will give me not only parents, and parents I can love as well as if they were those granted by nature, but you will give me also two such sisters as few others possess!"

"And I give you all, dearest Dus, encumbered with such a husband that I am almost afraid you will fancy the other gifts too dearly purchased, when you come to know him better."

The ingenuous, grateful look, the conscious blush, and the thoughtful, pensive smile, each and all said that my pleased and partial listener had no concern on that score. Had I then understood the sex as well as I do now, I might have foreseen that a wife's affection augments, instead of diminishing; that the love the pure and devoted matron bears her husband increases with time, and gets to be a part and parcel of her moral existence. I am no advocate of what are called, strictly, "marriages of reason"—I think the solemn and enduring knot should be tied by the hands of warm-hearted, impulsive affection, increased and strengthened by knowledge and confidential minglings of thought and feeling; but I have lived long enough to understand that, lively as are the passions of youth, they produce no delights like those which spring from the tried and deep affections of a happy married life.

And we were married! The ceremony took place before breakfast, in order to enable our friends to reach the great highway ere night should overtake them. The meal that succeeded was silent and thoughtful. Then my dear, dear mother took Dus in her arms, and kissed and blessed her

again and again. My honored father did the same, bidding my weeping but happy bride remember that she was now his daughter. "Mordaunt is a good fellow, at the bottom, dear, and will love and cherish you, as he has promised," added the general, blowing his nose to conceal his emotion; "but should he ever forget any part of his vows, come to me, and I will visit him with a father's displeasure."

"No fear of Mordaunt—no fear of Mordaunt," put in my worthy grandmother, who succeeded in the temporary leave-taking; "he is a Littlepage, and all the Littlepages make excellent husbands. The boy is as like what his grandfather was, at his time of life, as one pea is like another. God bless you, daughter—you will visit me at Satanstoe this fall, when I shall have great pleasure in showing you my general's picture."

Anneke and Kate and Pris. Bayard, hugged Dus in such a way that I was afraid they would eat her up, while Frank took his leave of his sister with the manly tenderness he always showed her. The fellow was too happy, however, to be shedding many tears, though Dus actually sobbed on his bosom. The dear creature was doubtless running over the past, in her mind, and putting it in contrast with the blessed present.

At the end of the honey-moon, I loved Dus twice as much as I had loved her the hour we were married. Had any one told me this was possible, I should have derided the thought; but thus it was, and I may truly add, thus has it ever continued to be. At the end of that month we left Ravensnest for Lilacsbush, when I had the pleasure of seeing my bride duly introduced to that portion of what is called the world, to which she properly belonged. Previously to quitting the Patent, however, all my plans were made, and contracts were signed, preparatory to the construction of the house that my father had mentioned. The foundation was laid that same season, and we did keep our Christmas holidays in it, the following year, by which time Dus had made me the father of a noble boy.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Frank and Pris. were married, as were Tom and Kate, at no great distance of time

after ourselves. Both of those matches have turned out to be perfectly happy. Old Mr. Malbone did not survive the winter, and he left the whole of a very sufficient estate to his kinsman. Frank was desirous of making his sister a sharer in his good fortune, but I would not hear of it. Dus was treasure enough of herself, and wanted not money to enhance her value in my eyes. I thought so in 1785, and I think so to-day. We got some plate and presents, that were well enough, but never would accept any portion of the property. The rapid growth of New York brought our vacant lots in that thriving town into the market, and we soon became richer than was necessary to happiness. I hope the gifts of Providence have never been abused. Of one thing I am certain ; Dus has ever been far more prized by me than any other of my possessions.

I ought to say a word of Jaap and the Indian. Both are still living, and both dwell at the 'Nest. For the Indian I caused a habitation to be erected in a certain ravine, at no great distance from the house, and which had been the scene of one of his early exploits in that part of the country. Here he lives, and has lived for the last twenty years, and here he hopes to die. He gets his food, blankets, and whatever else is necessary to supply his few wants, at the 'Nest, coming and going at will. He is now drawing fast on old age, but retains his elastic step, upright movement, and vigor. I do not see but he may live to be a hundred. The same is true of Jaap. The old fellow holds on, and enjoys life like a true descendant of the Africans. He and Sus are inseparable, and often stray off into the forests on long hunts, even in the winter, returning with loads of venison, wild turkeys, and other game. The negro dwells at the 'Nest, but half his time he sleeps in the wigwam, as we call the dwelling of Sus. The two old fellows dispute frequently, and occasionally they quarrel ; but, as neither drinks, the quarrels are never very long or very serious. They generally grow out of differences of opinion on moral philosophy, as connected with their respective views of the past and the future.

Lowiny remained with us as a maid until she made a very

suitable marriage with one of my own tenants. For a little while after my marriage I thought she was melancholy, probably through regret for her absent and dispersed family; but this feeling soon disappeared, and she became contented and happy. Her good looks improved under the influence of civilization, and I have the satisfaction of adding that she never has had any reason to regret having attached herself to us. To this moment she is an out-door dependent and humble friend of my wife, and we find her particularly useful in cases of illness among our children.

What shall I say of 'Squire Newcome? He lived to a good old age, dying quite recently; and with many who knew, or, rather, who did not know him, he passed for a portion of the salt of the earth. I never proceeded against him on account of his connection with the squatters, and he lived his time in a sort of lingering uncertainty as to my knowledge of his tricks. That man became a sort of a deacon in his church, was more than once a member of the Assembly, and continued to be a favorite recipient of public favors down to his last moment; and this simply because his habits brought him near to the mass, and because he took the most elaborate care never to tell them a truth that was unpleasant. He once had the temerity to run against me for Congress, but that experiment proved to be a failure. Had it been attempted forty years later, it might have succeeded better. Jason died poor and in debt, after all his knavery and schemes. Avidity for gold had overreached itself in his case, as it does in those of so many others. His descendants, notwithstanding, remain with us; and while they have succeeded to very little in the way of property, they are the legitimate heritors of their ancestor's vulgarity of mind and manners—of his tricks, his dissimulations, and his frauds. This is the way in which Providence "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations."

Little more remains to be said. The owners of Mooseridge have succeeded in selling all the lots they wished to put into the market, and large sums stand secured on them, in the way of bonds and mortgages. Anneke and Kate

have received fair proportions of this property, including much that belonged to Colonel Follock, who now lives altogether with my parents. Aunt Mary, I regret to say, died a few years since, a victim to small-pox. She never married, of course, and left her handsome property between my sisters and a certain lady of the name of Ten Eyck, who needed it, and whose principal claim consisted in her being a third cousin of her former lover, I believe. My mother mourned the death of her friend sincerely, as did we all; but we had the consolation of believing her happy with the angels.

I caused to be erected, in the extensive grounds that were laid out around the new dwelling at the 'Nest, a suitable monument over the grave of Chainbearer. It bore a single inscription, and one that my children now often read and comment on with pleasure. We all speak of him as "Uncle Chainbearer" to this hour, and his grave is never mentioned on other terms than those of "Uncle Chainbearer's grave." Excellent old man! That he was not superior to the failings of human nature, need not be said; but so long as he lived, he lived a proof of how much more respectable and estimable is the man who takes simplicity, and honesty, and principle, and truth for his guide, than he who endeavors to struggle through the world by the aid of falsehood, chicanery, and trick.

THE END.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.
DISCHARGE-URL
OCT 1 1979
JAN 1 1980
Form L9–Series 4939

3 1158 00506 7953